

## Peripheral nerve block for lower limb: What should you know?

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### Introduction

This leaflet aims to provide the basic information about the peripheral nerve block for lower limb that you are going to receive. If you have any questions about your anaesthesia that are not covered in this leaflet, please discuss with your anaesthetist. They are always there to clear your queries.

### What is peripheral nerve block for lower limb?

Peripheral nerve block for lower limb is a form of regional anaesthesia. Local anaesthetic is injected around the nerves supplying the lower limb. This will temporarily block the sensation and power of the corresponding parts of lower limb at that side. The followings are common types of peripheral nerve block for lower limb:

1. Sciatic nerve block
2. Femoral nerve block
3. Lateral femoral cutaneous nerve block
4. Obturator nerve block
5. Popliteal nerve block
6. Ankle block

More than one nerve block may be performed together to provide anaesthesia. The sites of injection depend on the site of your operation.

Peripheral nerve block for lower limb can alone provide regional anaesthesia for operation of your lower limb. More commonly, it is used to supplement general anaesthesia to provide pain relief during and after your lower limb operation.

### Are there any conditions that make me not suitable for peripheral nerve block for lower limb?

Your anaesthetist will determine whether you are suitable for peripheral nerve block for lower limb after assessing your medical conditions and the nature of your operation.

Some conditions may make you unsuitable for the block:

- If you refuse
- If you have bleeding disorder: ease of bruising/prolonged bleeding
- If you receive anticoagulant or anti-platelet treatment: medications to 'thin' your blood or prevent clotting
- If you have infection around the proposed injection site

### **General information about peripheral nerve block for lower limb**

- Your nerve block will be performed by your anaesthetist. He/she will do a pre-anaesthetic assessment before the procedure, including brief history taking, medical examination and review your investigation results. He/she will also discuss with you on the risks and benefits of your procedure and sign the consent form with you.
- Fasting: you should fast at least 6 hours before your operation. You can safely drink water until 2 hours before the operation.
- You are allowed to take your usual medications (as instructed by your anaesthetist) with sips of water while you are fasting.
- If you feel unwell on the day of your operation, you should inform the hospital and your operation may need to be postponed.

### **How is peripheral nerve block for lower limb performed?**

- Vital sign monitors will be attached to you before the nerve block.
- Your anaesthetist will insert an angio-catheter into your vein and attach it to a running drip.
- Your nerve block will be done awake, after sedation or general anaesthesia.
- You will be asked to lie with different lower limb position depending on the site of needle insertion.
- Peripheral nerve stimulator or ultrasound machine may be used to guide needle insertion and help to locate the nerves.
- Local anaesthetics will be injected around the target peripheral nerve. The corresponding part of your lower limb will feel warm and tingly, then numb and heavy.
- Occasionally, a catheter may be inserted through the needle to provide longer pain

relief.

- If unfortunately the block is not successful or not working well, general anaesthesia may be needed.

### Is there any risk of the peripheral nerve block for lower limb?

In general, peripheral nerve block for lower limb is safe. The side effects and complications associated with this anaesthetic technique can be divided into 2 categories: very common and common, rare and very rare\*.

Very common and common side effects	Rare or very rare complications
Failed blocks	Catheter infection
Inability to bear weight	Broken catheter
Transient neurological damage including parathesia and dysethesia	Permanent neurological damage
Technical problems (kinked catheter, catheter withdraw inadvertently, displaced catheter, blocked catheter, etc.)	Perforation of pelvic organ
	Vascular puncture
	Local anaesthetic toxicity
	Local anaesthetic allergy

### Remarks

This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your anaesthetist.

Complications may sometimes occur despite all precautions. However, if they do occur, your anaesthetist will take appropriate steps to manage them.

\* Reference of occurrence rate

Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
1 in 10	1 in 100	1 in 1000	1 in 10,000	1 in 100,000