

Regional anaesthesia in podiatric surgery

Ankle and popliteal anaesthetic blocks



Information for patients

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals



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SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Why have I been given this leaflet?

The aim of this leaflet is to provide an overview of the types of anaesthetic that may be used prior to your surgical procedure.

What is an ankle block?



An ankle block is a type of regional anaesthesia that involves several injections around the ankle. This causes numbness to the foot. There are often two anaesthetics used:

- one that works quickly but only lasts for a couple of hours
- a second that takes a little longer to work but lasts for between 8-12 hours

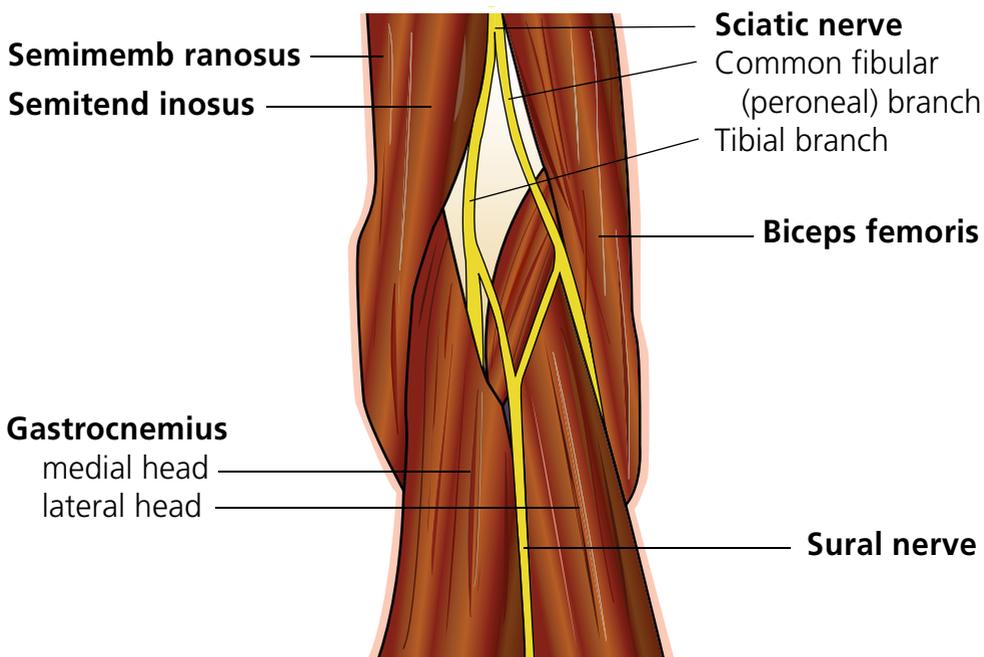
How is the nerve block performed?

Your clinician will administer the anaesthetic while you are sitting on your operative bed, but may advise you to lie flat in order to help with controlled breathing. If medical conditions prevent you from lying down, you should make the staff aware of this.

Will I feel anything?

Regional anaesthetic around the ankle only affects the sensation of pain. During your operation, you may be aware of temperature differences, movement and vibration.

What is a popliteal nerve block?



A popliteal nerve block is a type of regional anaesthetic that is injected into the back of the knee. This will cause numbness from the knee down, ready for your surgery. It is usually used along with an ankle block (anaesthetic injections around the ankle).

As well as numbing your leg, these nerve blocks reduce the muscle power in the lower leg. This means that you will not be able to put your foot to the floor for the first 48 hours.

Based on current evidence, these blocks can give between 10 and 48 hours' pain relief. However, it is still recommended that you start taking your oral painkillers as soon as you get home following your operation.

How is the nerve block performed?

You will need to lie on your stomach whilst a needle is inserted into the back of your knee. As this is in close proximity to the nerve, your foot will start twitching. As the intensity of this movement reduces, the anaesthetic will be injected.

This must be done twice to anaesthetise both of the nerves in the back of the knee.

Will it be painful?

This type of nerve block should not be overly painful, but may be uncomfortable. The twitching of the foot is more of a strange feeling rather than being painful. Should you want the injection to stop at any point, please inform a member of the team.

What is a digital or Mayo block?

A digital or Mayo anaesthetic block is administered on either side of the toe / metatarsal in question.

How is the nerve block performed?

Your clinician will administer the anaesthetic while you are sitting upright on your surgical bed, or they may advise you to lie flat as this can assist with breathing. If medical conditions prevent you from lying down, you should make the staff aware of this.

Will it be painful?

This type of nerve block should not be overly painful, but may be uncomfortable. Should you want the injection to stop at any point, please inform a member of the team.

Are there any risks?

All procedures carry some level of risk. However, the risk of any serious complications as a result of regional anaesthesia techniques are very small. Some potential risks include:

- Infection due to the insertion of a needle through the skin.
- Allergic reaction to the anaesthetic or accidental administration of anaesthetic into a blood vessel.
- Nerve injury as a result of a needlestick injury causing damage to the nerve. This may lead to a loss of sensation and/or muscle power. Although rare, this can be permanent.
- Puncture of a blood vessel which can lead to bleeding / bruising around the area.
- Chronic regional pain syndrome (CRPS) which is a neurological condition leading to long term (sometimes permanent) pain at the site of the injection.

Who should I contact if I have any concerns or questions?

Should you have any concerns, or wish to discuss your anaesthetic plan in further detail prior to your surgery date, please do not hesitate to contact us on:

- **0114 271 4668**



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