Continuous Femoral Nerve Blocks for Knee Surgery

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

You have received a Continuous Femoral Nerve Block (CFNB), which has numbed the front of your knee for surgery. A small catheter in your thigh is delivering local anesthetic, or numbing medicine, to the nerves. This catheter delivers the medicine by a disposable pump which will go home with you, and give you pain relief for the next few days!

How long will the CFNB last? How do I remove the catheter?
How long the CFNB lasts depends on the pump rate. At a rate of 8 ml/hr, the medicine will last about 3 days, or until this date: ______________. Keep the catheter in place until the medicine runs out and the pump looks completely deflated.

To remove the catheter, peel off the dressing, pull out the catheter (it will slide out easily), and throw out both the catheter and the pump. After the catheter is out, it will take several hours for the numbness and weakness to wear off. This is normal. Consider taking pain medication just as the catheter comes out; this way you are more likely to stay comfortable as the numbness wears off.

How to manage your CFNB catheter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pain at surgical site</th>
<th>Increase the pump rate (see below) and/or take your oral pain medications.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No pain, but leg feels “too numb” or weak</td>
<td>Decrease the pump rate (see below).</td>
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<td>Fluid under the dressing</td>
<td>A small amount of clear or pink fluid around the catheter is normal. If the CFNB is still treating your pain, then keep it in place and absorb the fluid with a towel if needed. If the CFNB is no longer working, consider removing the catheter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symptoms of ringing in ears, metallic taste, or numb lips</td>
<td>This may be due to numbing medicine in the bloodstream. Remove the catheter and call the KP Oakland Anesthesia department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catheter has fallen out</td>
<td>Remove the dressing and take oral pain medications as needed</td>
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How do I adjust the rate on the pump?
The pump can be adjusted up or down to find the lowest rate that keeps you comfortable. This lets the CFNB last as long as possible. Find the dial on the tubing. Open the clear plastic cover. The current rate in “ml/hr” can be seen at the top of the dial. Turn the dial up or down by 2 ml/hr (for example, from 8 ml/hr to 10ml/hr). You will feel the dial “click” into place. After you make a rate change, wait at least two hours to decide if any further changes are needed.

Department of Anesthesia/East Bay
What can I do with the CFNB in place? Is there anything I shouldn’t do?

ALWAYS ask for help when getting out of bed until you are cleared by the physical therapist. Part of your leg will be temporarily numb and weak. When getting up, keep the knee brace on while the CFNB is in place.

Do NOT operate a motorized vehicle until cleared to do so by your surgeon. Keep the catheter and dressing dry when bathing.

It has been several weeks since my surgery and I am still feeling numbness, weakness and/or burning pain along my leg. Should I be concerned?

Temporary nerve injury is uncommon, and usually goes away after a few days to weeks. Permanent nerve damage is extremely rare. Please let us know if you are still having symptoms several weeks after your CFNB catheter is out.

I am going to the doctor or Emergency Room while my CFNB is in place. Should I tell them about my CFNB?

Yes! Always mention that you had a nerve block when seeing a doctor or having any medical procedure done while your CFNB is in place. Show them this handout or ask them to contact the KP Oakland Anesthesia Department with questions.

What if I have questions after my CFNB?

During your hospital stay, you will be seen by an anesthesia provider every day while the catheter is in place. After discharge, you will be contacted by an anesthesia provider to check on your progress. If you have any urgent concerns, please call the On-Q 24 Hour Clinical Hotline at 1-800-444-2728. If the nurses on staff are unable to answer your questions, you may call the KP Oakland Anesthesia Department at 510-752-6238 during regular business hours, or call 510-752-1000 and ask for the anesthesiologist on call. After the catheter is out, call your surgeon for any pain-related issues.