



## ***Breast Surgery Paravertebral Nerve Block***

**FOR YOUR BREAST SURGERY**, your surgeon has requested that you have a nerve block, a procedure to help decrease your post-operative pain. The placement of the nerve block is an elective procedure which you can choose to decline. This brochure will help you to make an educated choice, which you can discuss in more detail with your Anesthesiologist on the day of your surgery.

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### ***What is a Nerve Block?***

It is an injection of local anesthetic near the nerve(s) which supply sensation and muscle control of the area(s) of your operation. This makes the area(s) feel numb and weak. It is primarily for postoperative pain relief and is combined with general anesthesia for your procedure.

### ***What are the benefits of the Nerve Block?***

The amount of general anesthetic medication and pain medication that you require during and after surgery are less than if you did not have the nerve block. This could lead to decreased side-effects from these medications, such as nausea and vomiting, sedation and constipation. Blocks can help to decrease the stress your body undergoes during surgery. In addition, you may have increased mobility more quickly, a shorter recovery period and better pain relief.

(CONTINUED ON REVERSE)

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## *What are the risks of the Nerve Block?*

Serious complications of a nerve block are rare. Any questions you may have can be discussed in depth with your anesthesiologist. There are five main risks to the nerve block. These risks are similar to the risks associated with your surgery. They include infection, bleeding, toxicity from the local anesthetic injection, nerve damage and lung injury.

Bleeding can occur because we use a needle to place the nerve block.

The risk of infection occurs because we are going through your skin (your body's natural barrier to infection) with a needle. We do use sterile techniques during the placement of the nerve block.

Local anesthetic toxicity can occur if the medication is injected in the wrong location. Nerve damage is a rare complication of nerve blocks. Nerve damage, if it occurs, is usually temporary and most patients make a full recovery in days to weeks. Permanent damage can occur but it is extremely rare.

Nerve damage can also occur from positioning during your surgery or from direct surgical injury. These causes are also very rare and your surgeon can discuss them with you.

Nerve damage is also more likely if you have a pre-existing condition such as diabetes.

Lung injury, also known as a pneumothorax (collapsed lung), can occur if the needle used for the block penetrates a layer of tissue around your lung, leading to compression of your lung. This may require placement of a chest tube to decompress your lung, which is placed by your anesthesiologist.

WE, THE ANESTHESIOLOGISTS OF SPECTRUM MEDICAL GROUP, ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING PATIENT-FOCUSED, STATE-OF-THE-ART PERIOPERATIVE CARE EACH AND EVERY DAY.

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