

PRESIDIO SURGERY CENTER

Post-Operative Instructions - Upper Extremity Nerve Blocks for Post-Op Pain Relief

Your anesthesiologist performed a nerve block on your extremity for relief of pain after your operation. Because of the nerve block, your arm may be temporarily numb and weak for as long as twenty-four hours. As the nerve block resolves, you may experience tingling sensation, or perhaps pain. If you experience pain, you may take the pain medications prescribed by your surgeon. If your shoulder pain persists, please call your anesthesiologist.

While your arm is numb and weak you are at risk of injury to your arm due to your inability to control movement of your arm or sense when something is damaging your arm or hand. For example, if hot coffee were to spill on your hand while your arm is numb you may experience a burn or other injuries without your knowledge. Thus, to avoid injury you should take the following precautions:

- 1. Keep your arm in the shoulder immobilizer (or sling) per your surgeon's directions, but at least for 24 hours or until the block wears off. The shoulder immobilizer (or sling) should be worn while sleeping as well.**
- 2. Avoid handling sharp or hot objects.**
- 3. Avoid work near stove, oven, barbecue or other hot object.**
- 4. Avoid contact with extremely cold objects. If you are using ice packs on your arm or shoulder, do so for no more than 15-20 minute intervals with a 10-minute break. Also, do not place ice bags directly in contact with your skin. Place a cloth towel between the ice bag and your skin.**
- 5. Do not operate an automobile or heavy equipment until your surgeon gives you permission.**

The numbness and weakness should wear off in approximately 24 hours (often less). If an area does not completely wear off, please consult your surgeon or call the Center and speak to the anesthesiologist who performed your nerve block.

**Your anesthesiologist: _____
Surgery Center Phone # (415) 346-1218**