

Phenol or alcohol nerve block

What is a phenol or alcohol nerve block?

A phenol or alcohol nerve block is an injection (shot) into a bundle of nerves.

- It is a way to treat muscle tightness, spasticity and pain.
- Sometimes, a medicine called phenol is used. Other times, alcohol may be used.
- The medicine impairs the nerves in the muscle fibers that are causing your child's problem.

What happens before the nerve block?

- Carefully follow the directions you are given to prepare your child.
 - This includes when your child should stop eating and drinking.
 - Your child's stomach must be empty so they do not vomit (throw up) and choke while they are asleep during the nerve block.
- Tell the doctor about any medicines your child is taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbs and supplements.
- Also tell the doctor if your child has any allergies to medicines.

What happens during the nerve block?

- **Your child will get the nerve block in the operating room (OR).**
- A doctor will give your child general anesthesia (medicine to make them sleep) during the nerve block. The nerve block needles and alcohol can cause pain when injected. With anesthesia, your child will not feel this pain.
- After your child is asleep, the doctor will inject the medicine into the nerves that are causing the problem.
 - A nerve micro-stimulator is used to make sure the medicine is injected into the right place. It gives a tiny shock to a nerve that controls a specific muscle. This causes the muscle to contract.
 - This allows the doctor to make sure that the correct nerve and correct muscle are injected.

Are there any risks?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about the risks and side effects. Some common risks and side effects include:

- Pain and swelling at the injection site.
- Decreased feeling beyond the injection site.
- Swelling beyond the injection site.
- Nerve pain in the nerves that were injected.
- Loss of movement to areas beyond the injection site.

Less frequent but serious side effects include irregular heartbeat, seizures and passing out.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Phenol or alcohol nerve block, continued

What happens after the nerve block?

Your child will be ready to go home when they:

- Are fully awake.
- Can drink fluids without getting sick.
- Can move again.

Your child should have a decrease in muscle tightness and spasticity after the nerve block. This most often lasts for 6 to 30 months.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor if:

- Your child has any of the common risks or side effects listed on page 1.
- You have any questions or concerns about how your child looks or feels.

When should I call 911?

Call 911 right away if your child has any serious concerns, such as:

- Breathing or heart problems.
- Seizures.
- Passing out.

Does my child need follow-up care?

- Make a follow-up visit for your child for 4 to 8 weeks after the injection.
- Follow any other directions or treatments as advised by your child's doctor.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.