

Orthopaedic Connection

Anesthesia Without Going To Sleep

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last time our discussion centered on regional anesthesia, which included spinal and epidural anesthesia. If you missed class, catch up by going to the website www.orthopodsurgeon.com to read last week's article "Put Me To Sleep Not Always Best".

This week I will cover peripheral nerve anesthesia.

Peripheral Nerve Blocks

The nerves which are away from the spinal cord are called peripheral nerves. These nerves can be blocked at several points along their paths.

Local anesthetics are given as close to the nerve as possible without entering the nerve itself. Some examples of medications used are Xylocaine and Marcaine.

Examples

IV Block

The anesthetic is injected into a vein typically in the hand which causes the entire arm to be anesthetized. Carpal tunnel surgery is often done with this anesthetic. The anesthetic can be released from the arm when the surgery is over.

Brachial Plexus (Supraclavicular) Block

Local anesthetic is not injected into a vein but into the tissue surrounding the large nerves at the shoulder which are to be blocked. This type of anesthetic can last several hours. An ultrasound machine is sometimes used to inject as close to the nerve as possible.

Local

The anesthetic medication is injected into the tissue in the area to be "frozen" or anesthetized without regard to where the peripheral nerves are.

Much of the surgery I do can be done with a Regional Anesthetic rather than "Going to sleep". It is mostly reserved for adults as children are not likely to hold still.

The safety of these various techniques described the last two weeks makes them very desirable and almost always insures being able to go home after the procedure.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

Wow! Your window to the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal world opens at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains the Website Library of information, Your Orthopaedic Connection and GCH archive of all previous articles.

You will be amazed at all the helpful information it contains.

All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush