



Venter  
Anaesthetic  
Associates

Patient Sticker

## Informed Consent: Nerve block for shoulder surgery

### Why a shoulder block?

Shoulder surgery is extremely painful post operatively. A good result is dependent on early mobilization of the shoulder joint by a physiotherapist but this is often limited by excessive pain. Nerve blocks relieve all or most of the pain and allows early mobilization that leads to a faster recovery and often earlier discharge from hospital. Less pain also leads to a more comfortable post operative experience.

### What does the shoulder block entail?

It is an injection of a local anaesthetic drug in the neck, close to and around the nerve that enervates the shoulder. If the block is successful it will prevent all post operative pain after shoulder surgery for a period of 8-24 hours. The shoulder block is usually done while under general anaesthetic, but in some cases it could be necessary to be done in the awake state. The shoulder block is a highly specialized technique and to help us prevent nerve damage either a sonar or a nerve stimulator is used in combination with a special kind of needle. When you wake up after the operation the arm and hand could be temporary completely paralyzed or in some instances only the arm. Once the block wears off we start with painkillers and usually the pain is not as severe as it would have been without the shoulder block. Your anaesthetist will do the necessary monitoring during the surgery and evaluate you before you being discharged to the ward.

#### ❖ **Contraindications:**

- Patients with existing nerve damage to the arm or the hand.
- Lung diseases like emphysema.
- Patients with diaphragm paralysis.
- Allergies to local anaesthetic drugs.

In spite of meticulous care and precautions measures all medical procedures have potential complications.

#### ❖ **Rare Complications:**

- It might happen that the block doesn't work at all or that it doesn't work as good as it should have.
- Tenderness, swelling and bleeding at the injection site.
- Other nerves may be blocked in addition leading to changes in your voice, hanging eyelid and paralyzed diaphragm on the side of the injection causing a feeling of heavy breathing. These are all temporary complications and will clear up within hours when the block wears off.
- In case a nerve gets damaged with this block it can lead to temporary or permanent weakness or paralysis of the arm and/or hand.

The shoulder block is an option given to the patient to help with post operative pain control. It is the patient's choice whether he/she wants the block and under no circumstances is the patient under obligation to receive the block. During about 95% of anaesthetics for shoulder operations performed by Celliersstraat Narkose Dienste shoulder blocks are performed and serious complications are extremely rare. We encourage you to discuss any uncertainties about shoulder blocks with your anaesthetist.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the above and consent to the administration a shoulder block to myself/my dependent.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Patient/parent or guardian)

Please hand this signed document to your Surgeons rooms for safe keeping.