

THE CASE FOR PERIPHERAL NERVE BLOCKS

FACT SHEET

- Preliminary findings with continuous peripheral nerve block infusions have been impressive. In fact, this technique may become the standard of anesthesia care in ambulatory surgery centers.¹
- A Duke University Medical Center study in which nearly 800 continuous peripheral nerve block techniques were performed over a 2-year period resulted in a nearly 93% success rate, nearly 99.85% of the patients were without any severe complications, 75% to 96% of the patients did not need narcotics after major surgery, and more than 90% of the patients were very satisfied with the continuous peripheral nerve block procedure.¹
- Advantages of peripheral nerve regional blocks include reduced recovery room admissions, decreased nausea, vomiting, and urinary retention, and improved postoperative analgesia.²
- In a study that evaluated anesthetic technique for outpatient knee arthroscopy, patients receiving 3-in-1 femoral blocks required less postoperative analgesia and were discharged earlier than patients undergoing general anesthesia. These benefits may translate into shortened hospital stays, decreased probability of hospital admission, and an overall reduction in hospital costs and patient charges.²
- A 1991 study reported on 109 pediatric patients undergoing 142 brachial plexus blocks found that these patients were less likely to be admitted to the recovery room, reported less nausea and vomiting, and required fewer analgesics before outpatient dismissal than age-matched control patients receiving general anesthesia.²
- The use of blocks in a recent study on patients undergoing total knee arthroplasty resulted in a reduction of hypotension by 66% and bradycardia by 77% compared with patients treated with general anesthesia.³

¹ Regional Anesthesia: The Effect on Perioperative Outcome. *Anesthesiology News*, December 2000.

² Horlocker, T.T., M.D. Peripheral Nerve Blocks-Regional Anesthesia for the New Millennium. *Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine*, 1998; 23: 237-240.

³ Chelly et al.. Continuous Femoral Blocks Improve Recovery and Outcome of Patients Undergoing Total Knee Arthroplasty. *The Journal of Arthroplasty*, 2001, 16: 436-445.

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