Pain Management after Surgery: Caudal Block in Children

Information for patients, parents and carers

Caudal blocks are used for babies, children and teenagers during and after surgery to help them recover faster by providing good pain relief.

What is a caudal block?
A medicine called local anaesthetic is given near the lower part of the spine for lower tummy or groin-area surgery. It may also be used for leg operations.

Why have a caudal block?
A caudal block can provide good pain relief because it can stop your child feeling pain in the area where they have had the surgery. Caudal blocks may have less side effects than other pain relief medicines.

What can my child expect after the caudal block?
Your child may feel numb in the lower body and/or over the operation area. Sometimes the area may feel heavy and/or tingly. Your child may have this feeling for 4-6 hours after the caudal block was given. Some blocks can last as long as 36 hours depending on the medicine used in the block.

Weakness usually wears off first. This is often followed by the heavy and/or tingling feeling wearing off, although this can vary. Generally, muscle strength is not affected but the lack of normal feeling may make your child wobbly when standing or walking.

Your child should be comfortable enough to move as allowed, to breathe deeply and to cough.

It is normal for your child to feel the need to wee. Sometimes the first wee after a caudal block may be slow to occur. Your child may wet their pants as the caudal block wears off.

How should I care for my child?
Do not let your child walk alone until normal feeling returns. Help them walk until they are steady.

Watch your child closely until the block has worn off as the numb limb/area is at risk for being injured without them feeling it.

Give your child paracetamol (e.g. Panadol®) or other pain relief medicine as suggested by your doctor if your child looks or feels sore.

Care at home
Your child should be able to go to school/child care/kindergarten the following day unless your doctor has given you other advice.

Your child should not play any sport or do physical education (PE) for 1 week after they have had a caudal block.

If your child needs strong pain relief medicines after they go home, your ward doctor will order these and you will be given information by the hospital pharmacist about them.

Key points to remember
- Caudal blocks give good pain relief during and after surgery
- Other pain relief medicines may be given to your child
- Your child will have their comfort checked regularly

More Information
If you have any other questions about caudal blocks, please ask your nurse or ask them to contact your child’s anaesthetist.
Remember, you know your child best and we rely on that to help us provide the best possible care for your child.

If at any time you are concerned about your child’s comfort please tell your nurse or doctor.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Contact a doctor, either your GP or at the Paediatric Emergency Department at the WCH if your child has any of the following:

- Not voiding regularly, at least every 8 hours during the day
- Pain which does not get better with paracetamol or another prescribed pain relief medicine
- Numbness, tingling or heavy feeling for longer than 24 hours after the caudal block was last given
- Ongoing numbness, tingling or heavy feelings to their legs, feet or other parts below the waist for longer than 48 hours after the caudal block was last given
- Redness, swelling, pain, bleeding or ooze from the area that the caudal block was given.

If your child needs to see a doctor in the first 6 weeks after having surgery please let them know that they had a caudal block.

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**Caudal Block Details**

- **Patient name:** ……………………………
- **Block date:** ……………………………
- **Type/area of block:** …………………………

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For more information

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