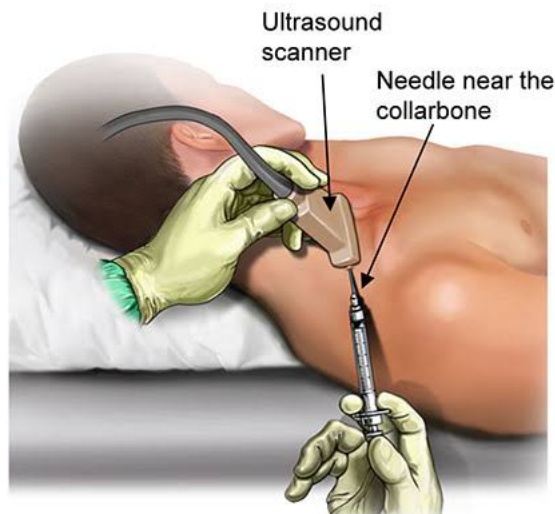


Pain relief for shoulder surgery



To improve pain relief after your shoulder surgery your Anaesthetist will routinely do an interscalene brachial plexus block. Whilst you will still have a full general anaesthetic, shoulder surgery can be very painful postoperatively; which is why this procedure is recommended.

This procedure involves the injection of local anaesthetic around the major nerve bundles supplying the shoulder. To locate the correct nerves an ultrasound and nerve stimulator will be used and there will be a small injection in your neck just above the collar bone. You will be given some sedation and the pain is minimal.

Once local anaesthetic is injected, patients may experience numbness and tingling in the upper limb and it will become difficult or impossible to move your arm.

The duration of the effect is variable but generally the "heaviness" wears off within a few hours and the pain relief persists for 12-24 hours. As the local anaesthetic effect wears off, numbness will diminish and surgical pain may return, in which case tablets for pain relief will be prescribed.

It is very important to request pain relief from your nurse as soon as sensation returns to your limb. **Do not wait for severe pain.** It is much better to prevent the build up of pain than to try to stop it once it is there. Please also remember that your arm should be protected whilst it is numb by being placed in a sling.

This is a brief summary for your information pre operatively. Your anaesthetist will discuss risks and benefits in detail before the operation. Or you can request a phone call from Dr Doogan for more information (drdoogan.com.au).