

# Pain Management after Surgery: Caudal Block in Children

## Information for patients, parents and carers

Caudal blocks may be used during and after surgery to help patients recover faster by providing pain relief.

### What is a caudal block?

A local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) is given near the lower part of the spine during surgery on the lower tummy or the groin-area. It may also be used for leg surgery. It numbs the nerves that carry painful sensation from the area of surgery so that the patient is comfortable.

### Why is my child having a caudal block?

A caudal block can provide good pain relief by stopping your child feeling discomfort in the area where they have had the surgery during the operation and for several hours afterwards.

### What can my child expect after having a caudal block?

Your child may feel numb in the lower part of the body and/or over the operation area. Sometimes the area may feel heavy and/or tingly. Most children are not worried about this. They may have this feeling for 4-6 hours after the caudal block. Some blocks can last up to 36 hours depending on the medicine used.

Leg weakness may occur, and this usually wears off first. This is often followed by the heavy and/or tingly feeling wearing off, although this can vary. 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 happen. They 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 in their legs. Help them walk until they are steady.

Watch your child closely until the block has worn off as they may hurt themselves where they are numb and not be able to feel the injury.

Give your child paracetamol (e.g. Panadol®) or other pain relief medicine if they look or feel uncomfortable, as advised by your doctor.

### How else can I help my child?

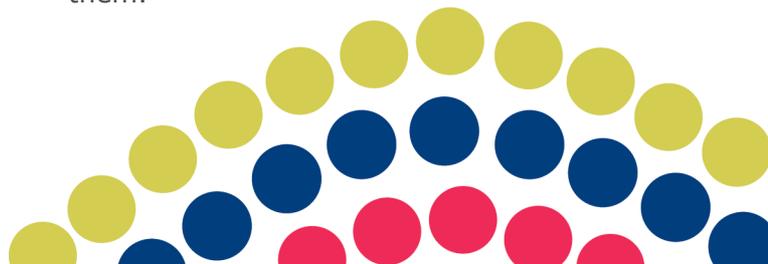
- Distract your child with books, movies or things they enjoy. Distraction can shift your child's focus away from recovering to something enjoyable.
- Help your child imagine in their mind that they are doing something they enjoy such as dancing or riding.
- Praise your child and reinforce their ability to stay calm and cope.
- Ask your nurse for a brochure about helpful words called 'Words I can use to help my child during a procedure'.
- Keep your words focused on getting better.

### Care at home

Your child should be able to go to school/child care/kindergarten the next day unless your doctor tells you differently.

Your child should not play sport, do physical education, or do anything strenuous for 1 week after the caudal block.

If your child needs strong pain relief medicines after they go home, your ward doctor will prescribe them and the hospital pharmacist will give you information about them.



**Key points to remember**

- Caudal blocks can keep your child comfortable during and after surgery.
- Other pain relief medicine may be given.
- Your child will be checked regularly to make sure they are comfortable.

**More Information**

If you have any questions about caudal blocks, please ask your nurse or ask them to contact the doctor who gave your child the anaesthetic.

Remember, you know your child best and we need your help so we can do the best for them.

**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 (doing a wee) at least every 8 hours during the day
- Pain which does not get better with paracetamol or another pain relief medicine
- Numbness, tingling or heavy feeling where your child had the caudal block which lasts longer than 24 hours
- 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.

Nurse to complete prior to discharge:

**Caudal Block Details**

Patient name: .....

Block date: .....

Type/area of block: .....

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**For more information**

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