



Tayside Childrens Hospital
Childrens Surgical Suite



Common events + risk in peripheral regional anaesthesia (RA) for children

Peripheral block regional anaesthesia is very safe when performed in a child under general anaesthesia/sedation, with the following risks reduced by use of an ultrasound to visualise injection of local anaesthetic. However, complications do happen. Risk will vary between individuals and depend on the technique used - your anaesthetist will discuss the risks associated with the specific block(s) to be performed and those they believe to be most significant to you and your child.

Your child's anaesthetist is highly trained to: deliver the safest possible anaesthetic, avoid complications where possible and detect and treat these should they occur.



COMMON - UP TO 1-3 IN 100

Equivalent to one person in a street



Block failure (partial or full) to stop/reduce pain



Prolonged numbness or tingling



Pins & needles as block regresses

Heavy limb (in case of limb block)



UNCOMMON - UP TO 1 IN 1000

Equivalent to one person in a village



Bleeding (around injection site)



RARE - BETWEEN 1 IN 1000 AND 1 IN 10,000

Equivalent to one person in small town



Temporary nerve damage (altered feeling, numbness, reduced function)



VERY RARE - 1 IN 10,000 TO 1 IN 100,000 OR MORE

Equivalent to one person in large town



Permanent nerve damage (altered feeling, numbness, reduced function)



Systemic injection of local anaesthetic medication: can have effects on the heart and brain



Infection (around injection site)



(the anaesthetist can detect + treat this)

Consent

Your consent will be sought pre-operatively for peripheral regional anaesthesia to be performed, and include discussion of the benefits, risks and alternatives for your child.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the risks of peripheral regional anaesthesia, please do ask. You will also have the opportunity to speak with your child's anaesthetist and ask questions on the day of surgery/procedure. If you would like the opportunity to discuss further prior to admission, please contact the children's surgical ward on: 01382 633830

Further detail and references:

- [1] Risk explained, RCoA: <https://rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/anaesthesia-risk/risk-explained>
- [2] PRAN (Paediatric Regional Anaesthesia network) complication dataset 2018: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30074928/>
- [2] <https://rcoa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-05/13-NerveDamagePeripheralNB2019web.pdf> - RCoA leaflet discussing nerve damage following peripheral RA block in adults in detail