

# Managing Your Pain with Transversus Abdominis Plane (TAP) Blocks



## Information for Patients about Pain Control with TAP Blocks

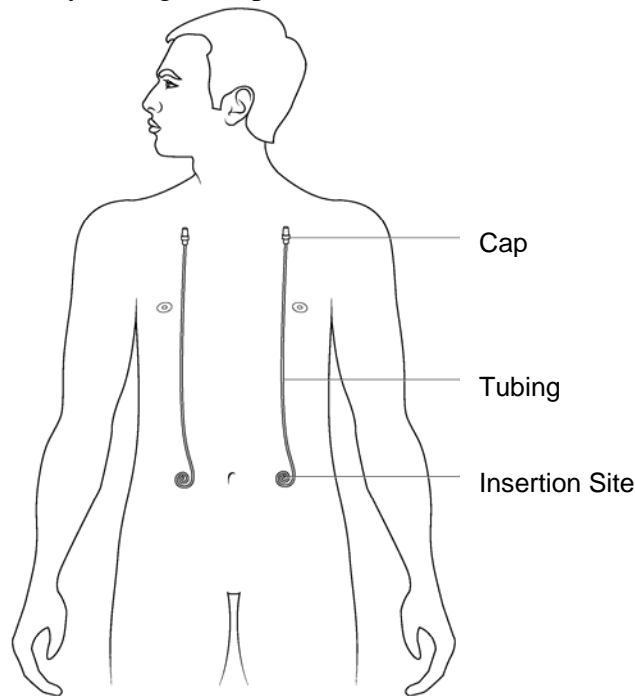
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When your pain is well controlled, you will get better more quickly after your surgery.

Since you know your own pain best, we will work with you to help you manage it. One way to do that is with a transversus abdominis plane (TAP) block. In addition to the medication given through the TAP block, you will also receive other pain medication.

### What is a TAP block?

Medicine for pain is called “analgesia” [an-l-jee-zee-uh]. TAP blocks are tiny tubes inserted in between a group of muscles in your abdomen during your surgery. The TAP block tube is placed precisely to target the pain nerves of the abdomen.



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**Created:** 06/2011

**Form:** D-5783



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After surgery, the Acute Pain Service (APS) team members will visit you and give you local anaesthetics (freezing medication) in your TAP blocks. The risks and benefits of TAP blocks are given below so that, with the help of your healthcare team, you can decide which method of pain management is best for you.

## **How do TAP blocks work?**

- Local anaesthetic medicine can be given into your TAP block every 8 to 12 hours, or it may be given continuously
- Some patients feel a cooling sensation when the anaesthetic is given into the block
- Within a few minutes after the freezing medicine is given, you may notice that your abdomen feels numb and you may experience less pain
- This medication can last up to 12 hours

## **What are the side effects and risks of TAP blocks?**

The most common side effects and complications are minor and easy to treat.

The following side effects are uncommon.

- Metallic taste in your mouth
- Unusual heart beat
- Ringing in your ears
- Numbness in your lips, in your tongue or both

**If you feel any of these side effects,  
please let your team know right away.**

## **What happens if I still have pain even with a TAP block?**

Tell your nurse or doctor if you still have pain. The nurses will ask you to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no pain and 10 is the worst pain you could ever imagine. You can also use words such as mild, moderate, or severe to describe your pain.

## **Who can I talk to about TAP blocks?**

If you have questions or concerns about TAP blocks, please discuss it with your anaesthesiologist before surgery, and any member of the staff after surgery.

At University Health Network, you and your family are an important part of the team that manages your pain.

For more information about pain management at UHN, visit our website at [www.uhn.ca](http://www.uhn.ca).