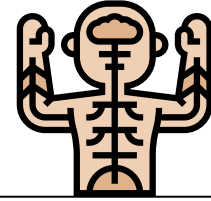
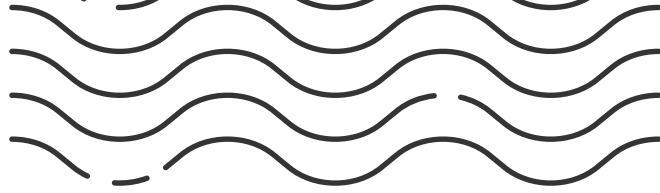


PUDENDAL NERVE BLOCK



01 WHAT IS A NERVE BLOCK?

In response to painful sensation, **nerves** carry signals back to the brain and cause the feeling of "pain". A nerve block is a procedure involving the **injection of an anesthetic** at a specific site to remove sensation at a particular part of the body. This creates a numbing feeling at that site. A common example of a nerve block is the numbing injection given before dental procedures.

02 WHAT IS A PUDENDAL NERVE BLOCK?

The pudendal nerve block is sometimes offered during a labour. If done, it is typically carried out after someone's cervix is fully dilated and **shortly before you start pushing**.

The pudendal nerve is the main nerve that picks up pain sensations in the vulva, clitoris and vagina. As a result, a pudendal nerve block can help relieve pain around the vagina and rectum as the baby comes down the birth canal.



The pudendal nerve block can look a bit scary. It is a large needle and the procedure does involve insertion into the vagina to access the area needing to be frozen.



03 DOES EVERY PREGNANT PERSON NEED TO GET ONE?

Nope! During labour, **epidurals** are actually much more common!

However, pudendal blocks can be useful in situations where you haven't been able to get an epidural or if an epidural isn't working well.

04 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS AND NEURAXIAL ANAESTHESIA?

(e.g., spinal, epidural, combined spinal epidural (CSE))

They are **different types of nerve blocks**. However, there are a few key differences with an epidural:

- Neuraxial blocks can occur anytime in labour, when you are having contractions or in preparation for a C-section.
- The neuraxial blocks occur in your back, near the spinal nerves, instead of a particular area within the vagina.
- With a pudendal nerve block, there is numbing in a smaller area compared to neuraxial blocks, where sensation is numbed from the waist down.
- If someone needs a C-section, a pudendal nerve block will not offer enough anesthesia.

References

Ghanavatian S, Leslie SW, Derian A. Pudendal Nerve Block [Internet]. StatPearls. 2024. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK544290/>

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