

Mastering lower extremity nerve blocks

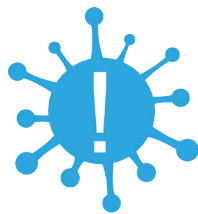
RECOGNIZING THE COMPLICATIONS OF LOWER EXTREMITY NERVE BLOCKS

Lower extremity nerve blocks are generally very well tolerated. As with any invasive procedure, they do carry risks. Ultrasound guidance will help to mitigate these risks. There are some typical risks of any nerve block.

Typical complications



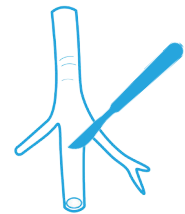
Hematoma



Infection



Limb injury



Nerve injury

Specific complications

Certain risks are unique to nerve blocks of the lower extremity.

The sciatic nerve block will give your patient a foot drop. This is temporary and expected. Patient positioning is often an obstacle for this block. Position your patient prone if possible. Compartment syndrome is unlikely from the blocks themselves but if your patient develops

compartment syndrome from their injury (i.e., tibia-fibula fracture), a block may mask the exam and make this difficult to diagnose.

The arteries of the leg are, in general, larger than in the arm. Nerves will tend to run with the arteries. Using ultrasound will help you to avoid inadvertent vessel puncture.



Patient positioning



Foot drop



Compartment syndrome



Injury to artery