

TAP Block Procedure

Pre- and Post-Surgery Checklist



What to Expect

Your care team will let you know if they plan to do a TAP block during your procedure. The injection process will happen while you're under anaesthesia (asleep), so you won't feel it or remember having it done. This may also occur after receiving a regional anesthetic like a spinal anesthetic. This is more common at the time of cesarean section. In this case, you may be awake for the TAP block, but you will be frozen (not feel pain) during the procedure.

Following a TAP block, your abdomen will feel numb. It's also common to feel groggy or sleepy as the effects of any anaesthetic medications you were given start to wear off.

What to Prepare

You don't need to do anything special to prepare for a TAP block, but you will need to follow your surgeon's instructions to prepare for the surgery itself.

This may include:

- When to stop eating and drinking the day before your operation
- Whether to stop, continue, or change your current medications
- How to clear out your bowel, if it's required

The hospital's Pre-Operative Clinic (PAC) will also call you at some point to review your medications and book you in for any necessary testing, like bloodwork.

Questions for Your Doctor

It's natural to have questions about any medical procedure, including a TAP block. Getting the answers you need will reduce any anxiety before and after your surgery.

Try asking your care team questions like:

- Am I a good candidate for a TAP block?
- If the TAP block doesn't work for me, do I have other options for pain control?
- How will my pain be managed once the TAP block wears off or stops working?
- Are there other ways to manage my pain that don't involve medications?
- Is having a TAP block the same thing as getting an epidural?

Some people find it helpful to write down a list of questions before each appointment.

Post-Surgery Recovery Process

Your recovery timeline will depend on the type of procedure you have, rather than the TAP block itself. If your surgeon feels you will benefit from it, you may be admitted for the first few days or go home later on the same day.

In the first week, you will likely:

- Feel fatigued or need to rest more often
- Experience bloating, flatulence, or a feeling of fullness in the abdomen
- Have mild swelling, with or without tenderness, near your incisions
- Develop constipation, especially if you're also taking an opioid medication

Your provider will tell you when you can start gradually returning to your normal activities, including work and exercise. They'll also let you know what to do if you develop a fever, heavy bleeding, or severe pain once you're released.