

Caudal Blockade for Children Undergoing Infra-abdominal Surgery

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Purpose/Goal

To provide the learner with knowledge specific to the use of caudal blockades to relieve postoperative pain in children undergoing infra-abdominal surgery.

Objectives

1. Describe the reasons caudal blockades are used in children.
2. Identify reasons that patients may not be appropriate candidates for caudal blockade.
3. Discuss the medications used to administer caudal blockades.
4. Discuss care of the patient receiving a caudal blockade.

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Chantal Yvette Keyser, MN, RN, has no declared affiliation that could be perceived as posing a potential conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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ABSTRACT

The assessment and management of pain in children can be complicated by their inability to communicate effectively; therefore, it is important that every attempt be made to circumvent the undertreatment of pain. Caudal blockade is associated with excellent pain relief and minimal side effects, and it is an established technique used in conjunction with general anesthesia for children undergoing infra-abdominal surgery. Available local anesthetic agents have a relatively short analgesic duration period, so anesthesia professionals often combine their use with adjuvant medications (eg, epinephrine, clonidine, fentanyl, morphine, preservative-free ketamine, neostigmine). Additional consideration should be given to intraoperative care, postoperative observation (eg, measuring sedation, motor blockade, postoperative nausea and vomiting, pain), and discharge instructions for the patient's caregiver. *AORN J* 100 (September 2014) 307-319. © AORN, Inc, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aorn.2013.10.027>

Key words: *caudal blockade, local anesthetic, adjuvants, children, pain management.*

Pain can be debilitating and make the experience of surgery decidedly unpleasant for any patient. For children, pain often is complicated by an inability to express discomfort (eg, infants) or an inability to clearly express what they are experiencing (eg, older children), making assessment and treatment difficult.¹ All attempts should be made to circumvent the undertreatment of pain and improve the overall perioperative experience for children. This can be accomplished by using a variety of pain management approaches, one of which is the use of caudal blockade to achieve both sensory and motor blocks. This article

defines and describes the process of administering a caudal blockade, commonly used local analgesic agents and adjuvants, risks and benefits associated with the caudal blockade technique, intraoperative observation and care of the patient, postoperative observation and care of the patient in the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), and discharge advice for parents.

CAUDAL BLOCKADE

Caudal blockade is an established technique widely used in children undergoing infra-abdominal surgery, such as hypospadias repair, inguinal hernia

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