

Incomplete Brachial Plexus Block

Anesthetic Pearls: Anesthetic Implications and Management of Incomplete Brachial Plexus Block

Brachial plexus block may be incomplete in the distribution of any of the nerves of the plexus. Checking the sensory distribution of the block may assess the nerve root that is missed.

The 4 major peripheral nerves of the Brachial Plexus are: **Musculocutaneous, Median, Ulnar, and Radial.** The efficacy of the brachial plexus block is tested by: "**Push, Pull, Pinch, Pinch.**"

- **Push:** have patient extend the forearm at the elbow against resistance (triceps muscle function). Weakness demonstrates block of the Radial nerve.
- **Pull:** have patient flex the forearm at the elbow against resistance (biceps muscle function). Weakness demonstrates block of the Musculocutaneous nerve.
- **Pinch / Pinch:** sensation is tested by pinching the palmar surface of the patient's hand at the base of the index finger and the 5th finger. Numbness demonstrates block of the Median nerve over the index finger and the Ulnar nerve over the 5th finger.

