



Neuromuscular Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery Enhanced Recovery After Surgery

Objective of the ERAS Pathway

This Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) pathway aims to standardize perioperative care and accelerate recovery for neuromuscular patients undergoing major orthopedic surgery, starting preoperatively with a bowel regimen, carbohydrate-rich fluid intake on the day of surgery, and preoperative warming. The pathway includes a multimodal pain management regimen utilizing single-shot peripheral nerve blocks that aims to reduce opioid utilization, decrease adverse drug-related side effects, expedite the resumption of oral intake, and promote the return of bowel function.

Background

Patients with cerebral palsy and those with other neuromuscular diagnoses often require multiple orthopedic surgical procedures. These procedures require specialized pain management strategies secondary to increased muscle tone and spasticity, which can be worsened by inadequate pain control. In addition, they have multiple medical comorbidities that can be worsened by traditional pain management with opioids.

Traditionally, pain control for these surgeries has required epidural catheters, but there are many patients in this population (those with a baclofen pump, dorsal rhizotomy, and prior spinal fusion) who are not candidates for epidural catheters. Replacing an indwelling epidural catheter with single-shot peripheral nerve blocks at the beginning of surgery may allow earlier patient mobilization, earlier discharge from physical therapy, and facilitate Foley catheter removal at the completion of the case. This patient population is at risk for many perioperative difficulties in addition to pain control, which include intraoperative hypothermia and delayed return of bowel function (Liu et al., 2017; Melnyk et al., 2011; Doyle et al., 2022).

Target Users

- Pediatric surgeons
- Nurse practitioners
- OR nurses
- Anesthesiologists

Target Population

ERAS Inclusion Criteria

Neuromuscular patients undergoing major lower extremity orthopedic procedures

ERAS Exclusion Criteria

- Neurotypically developed patients
- Neuromuscular patients undergoing only soft tissue work
- Neuromuscular patients undergoing hardware removal only

Core Principles of ERAS

- Preoperative education of patients and their families with an introduction to ERAS
- Reduced preoperative fasting, with clear liquid oral carbohydrate loading 2 hours prior to surgery
- Goal-directed strict intraoperative intravenous fluid therapy guidelines to avoid hypo- or hypervolemia
- Avoidance of preoperative mechanical bowel preparation
- Avoidance of routine nasogastric tube use
- Minimizing long-acting opioid analgesia in favor of regional anesthesia with epidural and/or local anesthesia for intraoperative and postoperative pain control when appropriate and using alternative non-opioid medications when appropriate (e.g., non-steroidal anti-inflammatories or acetaminophen)
- Early postoperative mobilization
- Early postoperative enteral feeding

ERAS Management Recommendations:

Preoperative Care

- This ERAS protocol begins well before the surgical date. The ERAS concept is presented to the patient/family at the initial surgical appointment and reinforced preoperatively.
- At the initial surgical appointment, the patient and family are provided with educational items on preoperative diet restrictions, risks of anesthesia, and pain management.



- Some of the core concepts of ERAS, including the emphasis on early post-op PO intake and a multimodal pain management approach, are also discussed. Expectation management is crucial in the preoperative phase. Two handouts (Appendices A and B), approved by CM's Health Literacy Committee, are given to the family before they depart their pre-surgery appointment.
- Patients and families are provided with contacts for Dr. Keeler's nurse to answer any questions they may have prior to the procedure.
- On the morning of surgery, the patient drinks carbohydrate-rich clear fluids up to two hours before the procedure starts.

Intraoperative Care

The principal goals during the intraoperative care of these patients are:

- Multimodal approach to pain management
 - Discuss peripheral nerve blocks with the surgeon at huddle
 - Minimize the use of long-acting opioids
- Postoperative nausea and vomiting prophylaxis with dexamethasone and ondansetron
- Fluid management goal of clinical euvoemia
- Ensure that antibiotics are administered prior to surgical incision
- Maintain normothermia throughout the entire procedure
- Discontinue urinary catheter prior to transfer to PACU

Postoperative Care

The principal goals during the postoperative care of these patients are:

- Move toward PO intake as early as possible and avoid NG tube placement
- Advance diet on postoperative day 0
- Prevent/treat postoperative nausea and vomiting with dexamethasone and ondansetron prn
- Multimodal pain control: Consult acute pain service on all cases and write all pain orders on postoperative day 0
 - Dexmedetomidine infusion
 - PO diazepam
 - IV acetaminophen
 - IV ketorolac
 - Oxycodone prn once patient tolerates clears
 - IV hydromorphone or morphine prn for severe breakthrough pain or if not tolerating PO intake
- Physical therapy (PT) Consult

Additional Questions Posed by the ERAS Committee

No clinical questions were posed for this review.

Key Metrics To Be Monitored:

Preoperative	Intraoperative	Postoperative
Carbohydrate-rich drink	IV acetaminophen	PACU PONV score
	PONV prophylaxis	Average pain score
	ABX prior to incision	Long-acting opioids
	Ketorolac	Diazepam
	Normothermia	Length of stay
	Euvoemia	Dexmedetomidine infusion
	Nerve blocks/neuraxial anesthesia	
	Long-acting opioids	

Value Implications

The following improvements may increase value by reducing healthcare and non-monetary costs (e.g., missed school/work, loss of wages, stress) for patients and families, and by reducing costs and resource utilization for healthcare facilities.

- Decreased inpatient length of stay
- Decreased unwarranted variation in care
- Improved communication between patients and the care team throughout the perioperative period
- Improved post-operative pain control



Organizational Barriers and Facilitators

Potential Barriers

- Variability of acceptable level of risk among providers
- Challenges with follow-up faced by some families

Potential Facilitators

- Collaborative engagement across care continuum settings during ERAS development
- High rate of use of ERAS

Order Sets

- There are no Order Sets associated with this ERAS pathway

Education Materials

- ERAS overview handout
 - Intended to be a general handout encompassing the key concepts and plan for an ERAS pathway
 - Found on the CM external website for each ERAS pathway
 - Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

ERAS Pathway Preparation

This surgical pathway was prepared by the Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Department in collaboration with the Neuromuscular Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery ERAS pathway, composed of content experts at Children's Mercy. If a conflict of interest is identified, the conflict will be disclosed next to the committee member's name.

NM Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery ERAS Committee Members and Representation

- Nichole Doyle, MD, FASA | Anesthesiology | Committee Co-Chair
- Emily Weisberg, MD, FASA | Anesthesiology | Committee Co-Chair
- Kathryn Keeler, MD | Orthopedic Surgery | Committee Member
- Azita Roberson, MSN, RN, CPN, APRN, FNP-C | Anesthesiology | Committee Member

EBP Committee Members

- Todd Glenski, MD, MSHA, FASA | Anesthesiology, Evidence Based Practice
- Megan Gripka, MT (ASCP) SM | Evidence Based Practice
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ERAS Development Funding

The development of this ERAS pathway was underwritten by the following departments/divisions: Evidence Based Practice, Anesthesiology, and Orthopedic Surgery.

Conflict of Interest

The contributors to the Neuromuscular Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery ERAS have no conflicts of interest to disclose related to the subject matter or materials discussed.

Approval Process

- This product was reviewed and approved by the Neuromuscular Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery ERAS Committee, Content Expert Departments/Divisions, and the EBP Department.
- Pathways are reviewed and updated as necessary every 3 years within the EBP Department at Children's Mercy. Content expert teams are involved with every review and update.

Review Requested

Department/Unit	Date Approved
Anesthesiology	August 2022
Orthopedic Surgery	September 2022
Evidence Based Practice	September 2022



Version History

Date	Comments
October 2022	Initial version – algorithm, synopsis, and education developed
December 2024	Version two – drugs utilized in post-op care and recovery were reviewed and updated by the committee
July 2025	Updated medications in the Intraoperative Medication Bundle per Anesthesiology and Orthopedic Surgery committee members
March 2026	Version three - Updated references to power plans to order sets, CMKC to Children's Mercy. Confirmed updates and version with committee members.

Date for Next Review:

- March 2029

Implementation & Follow-Up

- Once approved, the ERAS pathway was presented to appropriate care teams and implemented.
- Key metrics will be assessed and shared with the appropriate care teams to determine whether changes are needed.
- Education tools for patients and families were created for pre-surgery visits to provide an overview of the ERAS pathway. Health literacy reviewed the tool.
- Education was provided to all stakeholders:
 - Nursing units where Neuromuscular Patients Undergoing Major Orthopedic Surgery ERAS is used
 - Departments of Orthopedic Surgery and Anesthesiology
 - Resident physicians

Disclaimer

When evidence is lacking or inconclusive, options in care are provided in the supporting documents that accompany the ERAS pathway.

These ERAS pathways do not establish a standard of care to be followed in every case. It is recognized that each case is different, and those individuals involved in providing health care are expected to use their judgment to determine what is in the best interests of the patient based on the circumstances existing at the time.

It is impossible to anticipate all possible situations that may exist and to prepare ERAS pathways for each. Accordingly, these ERAS pathways should guide care with the understanding that departures from them may be required at times.



References

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- Doyle, N. M., Keeler, K., Glenski, T. A., Goodrich, E., & Madhira, M. (2022). Enhanced recovery after surgery in pediatric cerebral palsy patients undergoing bilateral lower extremity orthopedic surgery: A pilot study. *Paediatr Anaesth*, 32(4), 582–583. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pan.14348>