Physician-Patient Script: Intense Pain After Block Has Worn Off
A script for dealing with this common pain relief scenario

**Empathize, normalize the pain, rule out problems, strategize, be available.**

- Acknowledge that “It’s difficult when the block wears off....it can feel like something is wrong.”
- “It should get better from now on.”
- Ask “Are you using all of the pain management strategies we discussed?” then listen to the strategies they have tried and suggest those they have not.
- Then run through this script: “If you are having trouble getting comfortable the night after your surgery, you can try to:
  - Add acetaminophen if it’s not in the medication you are already taking.
  - Add ibuprofen or naproxen.
  - Stagger the acetaminophen and ibuprofen so that you’re taking one or the other every 3 hours.
  - As nerve block is wearing off, take the stronger pain reliever every 3 hours for the next 3 doses.
  - Elevate the surgical area.
  - Apply ice (bag of ice wrapped in a towel; 10 minutes on, 5 minutes off, repeat).”

- “Which one of those strategies do you think you’d like to try?” Listen for their response and validate their choice.
- “Do you have someone who can help you while you get over this bump?”
- “We’ll call you in the morning and see how you’re doing. You can page us through the main hospital operator if you think something is wrong.”
- “Can you repeat back our plan?” Listen to ensure they know what to do.
- “Tell me your questions.” Listen with patience and repeat any instructions that were missed.