



CERVICAL FACET BLOCK AND STEROID INJECTION

Reasons for procedure: Your doctor has requested this procedure because you have neck, shoulder and/or arm pain. The two major reasons to perform this procedure are to determine whether particular facet joints in your neck are causing your symptoms, and to provide temporary pain relief. Although these goals are usually achieved, it is impossible to guarantee that the cause of your pain will be identified, and that your pain will be decreased. The period of relief is different in each patient.

Description of procedure: The procedure takes about 15 minutes. You will lie on your stomach on a cushion. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic soap, and then numbed with a local anesthetic. Using fluoroscopy (continuous x-ray), a needle will be directed into the facet joint that is believed to be causing your pain. A separate needle is used for each joint to be injected. A very small amount of contrast dye may be injected to confirm correct needle position, and then the medications will be injected. During the injection, you may feel mild pressure or tingling in your neck or shoulders. These sensations are expected and will only last several seconds.

Two different medications are injected around your joint. A short-acting anesthetic agent is injected for diagnostic information. If your pain is relieved immediately following the procedure, this is a good indicator that the facet joint is the source of your pain.. A potent, long acting anti-inflammatory steroid will also be injected for longer lasting pain relief. The steroid may take 1-2 days to begin its action, and it usually reaches its maximum effectiveness in 5-7 days. The duration of pain relief depends on many factors, including the severity and reversibility of your condition.

After the procedure: You will receive discharge instructions. The short-acting anesthetic can make your arms feel numb or weak for 2 to 3 hours. You should minimize activity during this time, and then resume routine light activities as tolerated. You should not drive a car until your arms feel normal. Avoid any strenuous activity or heavy lifting for 7 days.

Risks associated with this procedure: Complications are infrequent but possible. The needle could cause local bleeding or infection. Rare complications include allergic reaction to the x-ray dye or anesthetic medication. If the anesthetic spreads to nearby nerves, you may develop temporary arm weakness or numbness. Pain may be temporarily worsened after the procedure.

IMPORTANT:

- Please call us 24 hours ahead of time if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment: (615) 771-8274.
- Please bring your most recent MRI or CT scans of your spine to the procedure.
- If your symptoms are mild, do not take pain medications before the procedure.
- If you answer “**Yes**” to any of the following questions, please notify us prior to your appointment.
 - * Are you allergic to x-ray dye (contains iodine)?
 - * Do you have diabetes?
 - * Do you take Coumadin or other blood thinners?
 - * Are you being treated for an infection?
 - * Are you, or could you be pregnant?

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK. THANK YOU