

Selective Nerve Root Block

What is a selective nerve root block?

A selective nerve root block is an injection that is performed to determine if a specific spinal nerve root is the source of your pain and reduce inflammation around the nerve root thus decreasing or relieving the pain.

What is the Purpose of the selective nerve root block?

To treat back and/or leg pain that may be due to inflammation around a specific nerve root. However, it will not correct the medical problems causing the inflammation but may improve the level of pain you are experiencing. It is not unusual to need more than one injection to obtain long-term benefit. These injections are usually done in a series of three, a month apart if needed.

What are the risks of the procedure?

Some risks, although remote include: bleeding, infection, nerve injury, And allergic reaction to the medication(s). Diabetics may have short-term elevation of blood sugars. People prone to fluid retention may have increased fluid retention for 1-2 weeks.

What should I expect during the procedure?

You will be awake throughout the procedure. During the injection, your pain will be increased temporarily while the doctors locate the nerve root. You may feel some pressure when the medication is injected. You may get 4-6 hours of pain relief immediately after the injection due to the local anesthetic. However, your pain will most likely return and you may have more pain than usual for 2-3 days.

How is the selective nerve root injection done?

The patient is given a local anesthetic (numbing medication). The physician then locates, under fluoroscopy (low dose x-ray), a specific spinal nerve root. A needle is introduced through the skin into the area next to the nerve root. Medication is then injected into the area. The medications given include an anesthetic and steroid.

How much relief will I get and how long will it last?

Relief varies from one person to the next. The only way to know is to have the injection performed. The steroid may take several days to work and peaks in about 2 weeks. It may be several weeks before you feel a change in your pain. You may apply ice to the affected area for 20 minutes every 2 hours to decrease local tenderness. After the first day, you can perform activities as before and return to work.

Will I have any restrictions on the day of the procedure?

You may NOT drive for the remainder of the day after your procedure. No heat is to be used on the injection area for the remainder of the day. No tub bath or soaking in water (pools/Jacuzzi, etc) for the remainder of the day.

For what reasons should I call the Southwest Ohio Pain Center after the injection?

If you experience severe back pain, new numbness or weakness of your legs, loss of control of your bladder or bowels, or have signs of infection (temperature greater than 99.9° , drainage, redness/heat at insertion site) – call IMMEDIATELY.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE, PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:

- ◆ Take all blood pressure pills & heart medications prior to the procedure with a sip of water at least 3 hours before your requested arrival time. Your vitals must be stable to have the procedure.
- ◆ Have a responsible person to take you home.
- ◆ Arrive at the requested procedure time. Please do not be late or your procedure may be cancelled.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE:

- ◆ **Do not** take ANY of the following 5 days before your procedure: Coumadin
- ◆ **Do not** take ANY of the following 7 days before your procedure: Plavix
- ◆ Coumadin must be stopped prior to the injection. You must have a normal INR prior to the injection. **Do not stop the drug by yourself.**
- ◆ Eat or drink 6 hours before the procedure.

NOTE: YOUR PROCEDURE WILL BE CANCELLED IF:

**You have an active infection, flu, cold, fever, or very high blood pressure.
You do not have a responsible driver to take you home, arrive late for your
procedure,
or unable to follow the medication / fluid restrictions.**

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Call the office at (501) 219-1114 for procedure related questions.