

SYMPATHETIC NERVE BLOCK

(Stellate Ganglion Block / Lumbar Sympathetic Block)

What are the sympathetic nerves?

The sympathetic nerves are a chain of nerves that run on the front side of the entire spinal column. They are part of the autonomic nervous system which controls many bodily functions we don't think about, such as sweating, heart rate, digestion, and blood pressure.

What is a sympathetic nerve block?

For unknown reasons, the sympathetic nervous system can become activated and transmit pain following an injury. This can result in a condition known as Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). The sympathetic block involves injecting medicine around the sympathetic nerves in the low back or neck areas.

These diagnostic blocks are performed to determine if there is damage to the sympathetic nerve chain & if it is the source of your pain.

The Stellate Ganglion Block is useful for arm, shoulder, and facial pain.

The Lumbar Sympathetic Block is useful for back, leg and foot pain.

What is the purpose of the sympathetic nerve block?

These diagnostic blocks are performed to determine if there is damage to the sympathetic nerve chain & if it is the source of your pain.

How is the sympathetic nerve block done?

Upon registering at the Southwest Ohio Pain Center , we will begin your procedure. An IV will be started and you may be given medication for relaxation if you desire. Your low back (if performing lumbar sympathetic block) or neck region (if performing stellate ganglion block) will be cleansed with anti-septic solution and numbed with an anesthetic. This is felt as a stinging / burning sensation. The doctor will insert the needle near the nerve bundles. You may experience some increased discomfort. The procedure takes 15-30 minutes. A band-aid will be applied at the needle insertion site, which may be removed the next morning. You will be discharged when the physician authorizes and you are stable.

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.

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

Relief varies from one person to the next. The only way to know if it will work for you is to have it performed. The steroid may take several days to work and peaks in about 2 weeks. Therefore, 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.**

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