



Stellate Ganglion/Lumbar Sympathetic Injection

General Information

Your health care provider has determined that a sympathetic injection would be helpful in treating your neuropathic pain. The sympathetic nerve ganglions and plexi are throughout your body and regulate the fight or flight system. During injury and painful areas, these nerves can abnormally transmit or reinforce pain. Placing medication in this area can help treat your pain, depending on the area of the body injected. These injections are commonly performed to treat Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) or peripheral neuropathic pain.

Procedure Information: What to Expect

Prior to the injection appointment, there may be some medications that need to be stopped, and your health care provider will discuss these with you. They could include blood-thinning (anticoagulant), antiplatelet medications and/or anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, Xarelto, Coumadin, Plavix etc.

You are brought to the pre-operative area where you will be placed in a gown. Then, you will be escorted to the procedure room. You will lay on your back for the stellate ganglion block or on your stomach (facing down) for the lumbar sympathetic block, with your neck or back exposed, respectively. An X-ray/fluoroscope and/or ultrasound is used to see the bones to guide needle placement.

****If you are having a stellate ganglion block performed, you will have an IV placed on the opposite hand/arm and may be given a small amount of sedative just prior to the injection****

After a cold, cleaning solution is placed on your skin, it is important not to touch the area once it is cleaned. You will then feel a pinch and a burn (much like a bee sting), which is the local anesthetic (numbing medicine). After that, you will feel a pressure and a poke. Once the sympathetic nerve ganglion area is accessed in your neck (stellate ganglion) or in your back (lumbar sympathetic), contrast dye is commonly used to ensure proper needle placement. Then, the medication is injected, which will include a local anesthetic. Band-Aid/paper tape is applied to the injection sites.

You are then escorted to the post-operative area where you will be monitored for up to 30 minutes after the injection. When you are ready to leave, the staff will give you discharge instructions and help you make a follow up appointment if one hasn't been made already.

Post-Procedure Instructions

What should I do after the injection?

- Recommend taking it easy for the rest of the day
- You **MAY** do normal routine activities such as return to work, do household tasks etc.
- **DO NOT** participate in strenuous activities
- Resume all medications as instructed by your provider
- You should not be in sitting water (baths, hot tubs, swimming pools, lakes/ponds) for three (3) days after the procedure. **Showers are OK**
- May participate in formal physical therapy sessions 72 hours after your procedure. You may continue performing your home exercise program in the interim
- Keep post-operative appointment to report relief

When will I notice relief?

- Relief can be felt within a few days but can take up to seven (7) to ten (10) days

How long can I expect relief?

- The extent and duration of pain relief may depend on the amount of pain that is controlled by the sympathetic nerves
- **Intended goal is >50% relief for several weeks to months. If so, you may be a candidate for a repeat injection**
 - You **will** need to have an office visit prior to ordering a repeat injection to document relief from previous injection(s), updated location of pain and recent physical exam

What other things can I expect?

- Numbness, tingling or transient weakness in the area of pain
- Some soreness around the injection site for which ice may be applied
- **Stellate ganglion block**
 - Drooping eyelids, red or “bloodshot” eyes, tearing, nasal stuffiness, hoarse voice, feeling of a “lump” in your throat, difficulty swallowing, warmth or tingling in your arm or hand
 - These should resolve within 24 hours
- **Lumbar sympathetic plexus block**
 - Back and leg may feel warm or “different”, dizziness/lightheadedness
 - These should resolve within 24 hours

Please contact our office (815) 398-9491 if you experience:

- Significant weakness in the arms or legs for more than 24 hours
- Redness or swelling around injection site for more than 24 hours
- Bladder or bowel accidents and/or numbness around the groin
- Fever or chills