

EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION

Why has my doctor ordered this injection?

This injection may help to alleviate radicular pain. This is the pain felt in either your arm or leg which results from pressure and irritation on one of the nerves.

What will happen during the procedure?

Once positioned appropriately by your doctor, a fluoroscope (x-ray guidance machine) assists in identifying the specific area to be injected. The area is then cleansed and the needle is inserted into the epidural space (the small space surrounding the nerves inside the spinal canal). A special material will be used to verify that the needle has been correctly placed and that the medication will be delivered to the appropriate site. A long acting anti-inflammatory steroid is now administered and the needle is removed.

What should I expect after the injection?

It may take several days for the medication to quiet down the symptoms. Most patients report relief in 48 to 72 hours, although in some cases it has been noted to begin working in four or five days.

Occasionally, epidural steroid injections are administered in a series of two to three, depending on your physician's specific treatment plan for you. Your doctor and doctor's nurse will be able to help in determining what your next step should be once your result is apparently. Typically this is within three to four weeks following your injection.

What are the associated risks?

Rarely, the spinal sac which contains the nerves may be penetrated during the injection. This rarely may cause headaches. Should you experience one, lie flat in bed and contact your doctor's office for any further recommendations or treatment.

You will be asked to report any allergies at the time your injection is scheduled. This information is necessary for your doctor to know in advance should he need to provide substitutions or alleviate anything typically used in this treatment.

Be aware that the anesthetic will take several hours to wear off. It is imperative that you have someone drive you home as you will experience some temporary loss of sensation, weakness, and may find your coordination a bit awkward as well. Otherwise, you may resume your regular activities the following day.

On rare occasions, there may be other complications. If you have concerns, you should discuss them with your doctor.