

Nerve Root Injection

Why is this procedure done?

This procedure assists in determining which nerve root is responsible for your leg or arm pain, and possibly as an attempt to decrease the pain from an inflamed nerve.

What happens during the procedure?

Using fluoroscopy (x-ray guidance), a very small needle is placed into the nerve root sheath (the layer of tissue that surrounds the nerve). Once the needle approaches the nerve, you will experience some immediate discomfort. It is imperative that you tell the doctor as soon as you feel the discomfort.

Next, your doctor will inject a small amount of dye to verify correct placement of the needle. Once the accuracy of the placement is confirmed, a local anesthetic is injected. You should then experience relief of the discomfort. It is important for you to communicate to your doctor where and how much relief is experienced.

If requested by your doctor, a small amount of steroid may also be injected at the same time. This could further prolong relief of the pain.

The day of your injection, please take a few minutes before you arrive for your appointment to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10, ten being the worst pain you have ever experienced. At the time the anesthetic provides pain relief, once again observe where on that scale you identify your present symptoms.

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 temporary loss of sensation, weakness, and may find your muscle 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.