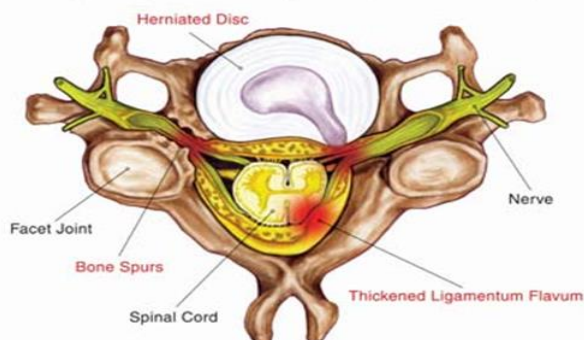


SPINAL INJECTIONS



BRAIN & SPINE
CENTRE
SYDNEY

Example of Spinal Nerve Compression (viewed from above)



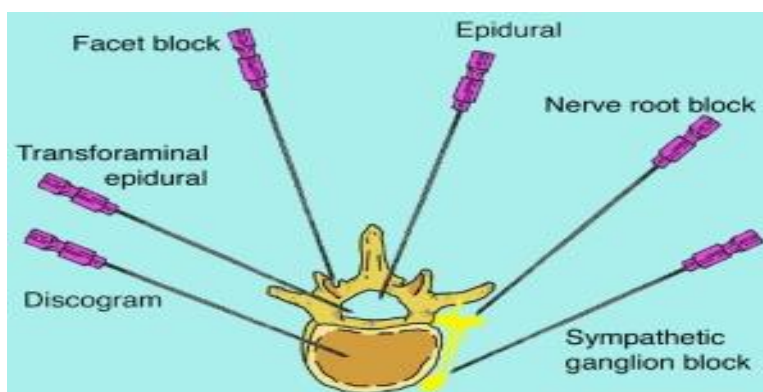
A spinal injection is a minimally invasive procedure that can help relieve neck, arm, back, and leg pain caused by inflamed spinal nerves or joints. This procedure can relieve pain by reducing inflammation (swelling and irritation). The goal is to reduce pain so that you may resume normal activities and a physical therapy program.

WHAT IS A SPINAL INJECTION?

A steroid injection includes both a corticosteroid and an anaesthetic numbing agent. The drugs are delivered into the appropriate space depending on the treating doctor's request. It is performed by a radiologist under CT guidance.

TYPES OF SPINAL INJECTIONS

- Epidural Steroid Injection (ESI)
 - Translaminar ESI
 - Transforaminal ESI
 - Caudal ESI
- Facet Joint Injection
- Nerve Root Block (or periradicular injection)



RISKS

As with all invasive medical procedures, there are potential risks associated with spinalsteroid injections. In addition to temporary numbness of the bowels and bladder, the most common potential risks and complications include:

- Infection
 - Severe infections are rare, occurring in 0.1% to 0.01% of injections.
- Spinal headache
- Bleeding.
 - Bleeding is a rare complication and is more common for patients with underlying bleeding disorders. You may be asked to stop anticoagulant medications such as aspirin, warfarin prior to procedure.
- Nerve damage.
 - While extremely rare, nerve damage can occur from direct trauma from the needle, or from infection or bleeding.

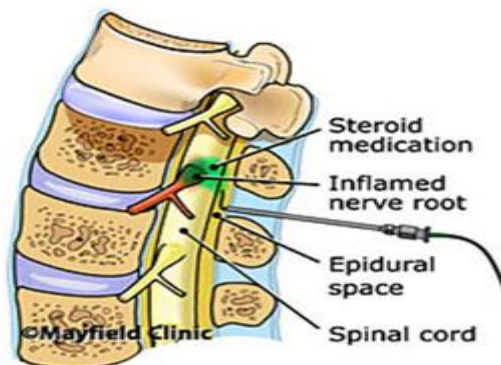
POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- Side effects which may occur but go away in a few days include: briefly increasing pain, headaches, trouble sleeping, facial flushing, hiccups, high blood sugar (if diabetic). It will take up to 2 weeks for the steroid medication to reduce inflammation and pain. Your doctor may wish to follow up with you after the injection.

PROCEDURE

Patients may be asked to change into a hospital gown, which allows for access to clean the injection area and to allow the physician to easily visualize the injection site. The treating radiologist will discuss this with you and explain the procedure. An epidural steroid injection usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes and follows a relatively standard protocol:

- You may want to ask for a mild sedative, but most people receive just local anaesthetic.
- If you have diabetes, an allergy to contrast dye, or certain other medical conditions, you'll want to discuss any concerns with your healthcare provider before getting the procedure.
- The patient lies flat on an X-ray table.
- The area is cleaned with antiseptic.
- Local anaesthetic is usually given near the injection site to numb the skin.
- Using fluoroscopy (live X-ray) for guidance, a needle is inserted into the skin and directed toward the appropriate space.
- A local anaesthetic and/or steroid is injected.
- A small dressing may be placed at the injection site.



POST PROCEDURE

You may need to spend time in a recovery area after the procedure so that you can be monitored. You should have someone to drive you home. You can take a shower but avoid baths or swimming for 24-48hrs following the procedure. You may be asked to take it easy on the day of the procedure, but can resume normal activities the day after the injection. If you have had sedation you should not drive for 24hours after the procedure.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

You should seek urgent medical attention if you experience any of the following: severe pain or headache, fever or chills, loss of bladder or bowel control, progressive weakness or redness or swelling around the injection site. You should contact the radiology practice in the first instance and your local doctor.

FOLLOW UP

Your neurosurgeon may ask you to make a follow up appointment after this procedure to review your progress.