



Epidural Block

What is an epidural block?

This procedure is used to help reduce back and leg pain. An injection of medications (steroid) to reduce inflammation and swelling is given. The injection is given between the backbones into the epidural space, which surrounds the nerves in the back. These nerves send pain signals from different areas of the body.

How does it work?

The injection is given in the area of the back, which is believed to be causing the pain. There may be swelling around the nerve, which results in the nerve sending pain signals. The medications are used to help reduce the swelling, which can then reduce the pain signals.

How is it done?

The procedure is done in Same Day Surgery. It will take about 20–30 minutes.

- In the Block Room, you will be asked to lie or sit on the table. You will usually be positioned so that the space in your backbones are as wide apart as possible. You may be asked to lie on your stomach, on your side, or to sit.
- An intravenous (IV) catheter will be placed in your hand or arm.
- The doctor will numb the area in your back, so you will feel very little discomfort when the needle is inserted.
- A needle will be inserted into your back. There may be some pressure felt when the doctor is inserting the needle. You should tell your doctor if you feel discomfort or other sensations.
- The medication will be injected when the needle is in the right area of the back.
- After the procedure, you will be taken to the recovery area. A nurse will monitor you for about 15-30 minutes.
- The nurse will give you information on what to expect at home.

What will the procedure do for me?

The epidural injection should help decrease your pain in the back area or other areas such as the leg. The procedure may be repeated, depending on your response to the injection. It may be several days before you have any benefit. Your doctor will discuss with you what to expect and whether more injections will be given.

What should I expect after the procedure?

- You will need to have someone drive you home.
- You may feel some numbness in your leg(s) for 1-2 hours after the procedure.
- Take it easy for a few days. You can eat, drink and move normally. Do not do any heavy lifting or excessive bending, twisting, pushing and pulling.
- You may have a flare up of pain up to a week after your procedure. Apply ice to the area for the first 24 hours and take your normal pain medications. It may take 2 weeks to get the full effect from the medication given during the procedure.

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