

Care Gram

Epidural Steroid Injection

An epidural steroid injection is a non-surgical treatment option used to relieve chronic pain. The pain relief varies with each patient. The treatment also is used to help with a sudden onset of severe pain. The relief of pain may help you to be able to take part in other programs to prevent pain.

How the Procedure Works

An epidural is the injection (shot) of a steroid medicine (anti-inflammatory) into the painful area of your back or neck. It goes into the sac of fluid around your spinal cord. This area is called the epidural space. It is used to reduce the swelling of nerve root tissue that may be causing pain.

About 50% of people will have less pain after an epidural injection or a series of several injections. Your doctor will decide how often you should receive an injection.

Risks of the Procedure

- There is a small risk of infection
- Bleeding is rare
- Headache
- Nerve injury or damage

Side Effects

Side effects are rare. If the steroid injections are given in large doses or over long periods of time, they may have side effects, such as:

- Increased blood sugar levels
- Osteoporosis
- Lowered immune system response
- Cataracts
- Increased/decreased appetite
- Emotional fluctuations
- Damaged tissue of the hip joint
- Upset stomach and diarrhea

Allowing Time

The treatment usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes. You should allow 1½ hours for the entire visit.

Preparation

The procedure will be completed at 2000 Tamarack Road. Enter through the outpatient surgery entrance and check in at the registration desk. You then will wait in the waiting area until a Pain Clinic staff member comes to take you to the pre-procedure area.



**Licking Memorial
Health Systems**

1320 West Main Street • Newark, Ohio 43055
(220) 564-4000 • www.LMHealth.org

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What to Expect

- You will be asked to rate your pain before and after the treatment using a scale of 0 to 10. Zero is no pain and 10 is your worst pain.
- You will lie on your abdomen for the injection. The nurse will assist you into this position and support you during the treatment.
- The doctor cleans an area of your back or neck for treatment and applies a sterile drape.
- You may be numbed with a numbing medicine. This may feel like a brief sting or a burn.
- The doctor inserts a thin needle into your back or neck. X-ray is used to locate the correct area for the injection.
- Then, the medicine will be injected. If you are having an injection in your lower back, you may feel a temporary cramping sensation going down one or both of your legs.
- The needle is removed. Your back is cleaned and a bandage is applied, if needed.

After the Procedure

You will return to the pre-procedure area for at least 10 minutes. Your blood pressure will be monitored. Unless another procedure has been scheduled, you will be asked to make a 6 week follow-up appointment with the doctor before you leave.

The Results

Since every person is different, the results cannot be predicted. We will contact you one week after your procedure to document your progress for the doctor.