

How should I prepare for this procedure?

- Speak to the pain specialist about any changes you might need to make in your medications. If you are not sure what to do, ask your family doctor about stopping any of your medications.
- Your pain specialist will tell you if you need an INR (blood test) before the injection.
- Please take all of your other medicines at their regular times.
- Eat a light meal the day of the procedure.
- Plan to take it easy for the rest of the day following your procedure.

What are the risks and side effects?

Possible risks include:

- Discomfort at the injection site
- No relief from your usual pain
- Puncture of the sac containing spinal fluid can cause:
 - infection
 - bleeding
 - nerve damage
 - headache

Side effects from the injected steroid can include:

- weight gain
- increase in blood sugar
- water retention
- suppression of your immune system

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

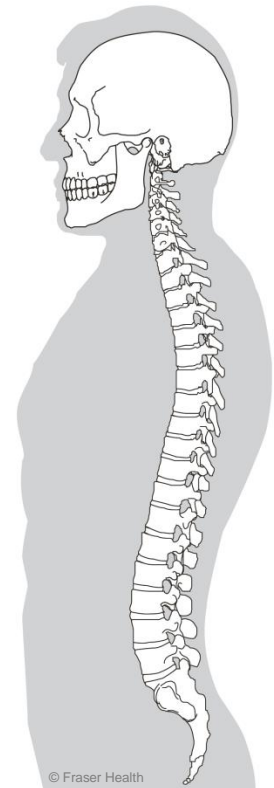
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Epidural Steroid Blocks

Pain Management Clinic

Jim Pattison
Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre

- Caudal
- Cervical
- Thoracic
- Lumbar



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What is an epidural steroid block?

An epidural steroid block is an injection of a steroid into the epidural space.

The epidural space is located just above the spinal cord, surrounded by a sac of fluid.

Why is it done?

- Nerves in the epidural space become inflamed when:
 - they are irritated by a bone spur
 - they are pinched by a disc
 - the space becomes too narrow
- The inflammation causes:
 - pain
 - numbness
 - tingling
- The steroid injection helps the inflammation and pain.

Will I be asleep for this procedure?

- No, you are awake during the procedure.
- The pain specialist* freezes your skin with numbing medication.

*For this pamphlet, 'pain specialist' means either a doctor or nurse practitioner

Before the procedure

- Arrive one hour before your procedure time.
- The pain specialist will talk with you about the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form.

During the procedure

- The procedure only takes a few minutes.
- You either sit up, or lie on your stomach.
- The skin on your back is cleaned before the numbing medicine is injected.

Will it hurt?

- You will feel a pinch and some burning.
- As the needle goes in, you will feel some pressure.
- The pain specialist will inject more freezing if you feel pain.

After the procedure

- You might feel:
 - heaviness in your legs
 - soreness at the injection site
- Your pain should improve in 1 to 4 days.

Will this procedure help me?

- This procedure works better for people with radiating pain (like sciatica) than people who have only back pain.
- Recent pain responds better than pain you have had for a long time.

How many injections do I need to have?

- Some may need a series of 3 injections 1 month apart. The pain specialist decides what is best for your type of pain.
- Your pain should improve after each injection.
- This treatment will not work for you if your pain does not improve with 3 injections.
- You may have 3 to 4 injections per year if your pain relief lasts for 2 months.
- We do not recommend more frequent injections because of the chance of side effects from the steroid medication.