

## How do I care for myself afterwards?

- You can return to your regular daily activities.
- Talk to your family doctor before returning to any physical activities, exercise, or sports.

## When will I get the results?


- Contact the pain specialist. Make a follow-up appointment to discuss the results.

## When to get help

Contact your family doctor if you have any of the following:

- fever above 38.5 ° C (101° F)
- flu like symptoms, such as fever, aches and chills
- severe weakness

## HealthLinkBC

 8-1-1

Call any time you have any health questions or concerns. HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours.

HealthLinkBC is available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

 [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

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[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

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

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To order: [patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca](mailto:patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)



# Selective Nerve Root Block In the Pain Clinic

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 **fraserhealth**

## What is a selective nerve root block?

- It is also called a 'nerve block'.
- This type of block is used to find out the cause of nerve root pain.
- Nerve root pain can be in the leg, lower back, neck, or upper back.

## Who does this procedure?

The nerve block is done by a pain specialist\* in the Ambulatory Care Unit.

## How do I prepare for the procedure?

Someone from the clinic contacts you with special instructions for how to prepare for the procedure.

You must make arrangements for a responsible adult to drive you home after 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.

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

## How long will it take?

Plan to be at the clinic for at least 2 hours. The procedure itself takes about 30 minutes. You stay in the clinic for up to 1 hour after the procedure.

## What happens during the procedure?

- You lay on a procedure table.
- The specialist finds the spot where the needle will be placed.
- The area is cleaned with antiseptic solution.
- The pain specialist injects numbing medicine to 'freeze' your skin around the nerve block site.
- When you are frozen, the specialist inserts a needle and injects numbing medicine.
- Special x-rays are used to guide the needle to the nerve causing your pain.
- Strong numbing medicine is injected into the area around the nerve through the needle.

You might need more than 1 injection if:

- you have more than one area of pain,  
**or**
- you have a large area that needs to be covered

It is important to lay as still as possible during the injection.

## Will it hurt?

- You might feel a sting or burning when the numbing medicine is injected.
- If you have pain or discomfort that is similar to the pain you normally have, it tells us that this is the nerve that is causing your pain.
- As the numbing medicine starts to work, you should start to feel some relief from your pain.

## What happens afterwards?

We move you to our recovery area to rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour. We check you for any unexpected side effects.

## Are there any risks or complications?

A nerve block is a safe procedure and complications are rare.

## Unexpected complication can include:

- bleeding but usually stops on its own
- accidental delivery of medicine to other nerves
- hitting the wrong nerve because it is very close to the target nerve
- long-lasting effect of the strong numbing medicine around the nerve causing weakness, numbness, or other symptoms