

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.
- The pain specialist will tell you if you need blood test (an INR) 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

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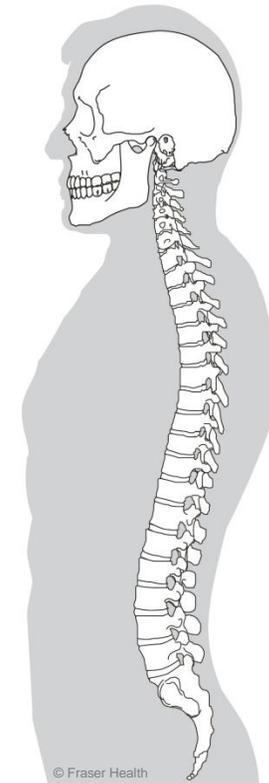
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Stellate Ganglion Block

Pain Management Clinic

Jim Pattison
Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre



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What is a stellate ganglion block?

A stellate ganglion block is an injection into the bundle of nerves (the 'stellate ganglion') that carry signals from the arms to the brain.

Injury to the arms can cause the nerves to send pain signals to the brain.

The injection in the front of the neck blocks the nerve and helps the pain.

How is it done?

A pain specialist* injects a small amount of local freezing medication into the bundle of nerves that carry the pain signals from the arms to the brain.

This tells us if this block will help your 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.
- X-ray images are used to guide the procedure.
- The pain specialist, an x-ray technician, and a nurse are all in the room to take care of you.
- You lie on your back.
- The skin on your neck is cleaned before the freezing medicine goes in.
- A nurse checks your blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen.

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 notice your pain starting to get better.
- You might notice the following things for a few hours:
 - Your arm may feel warm and numb
 - Your voice may become hoarse
 - Your eyelid may droop
 - Your eye may become slightly red

How long will the block last?

- Some people have a permanent block of the nerves.
- Most people have temporary relief from pain.
- Repeated injections can decrease your pain symptoms.
- Talk to the pain specialist to see what is best for you.

Who should not have this procedure done?

You should not have this if:

- You are allergic to any of the medicines that are used.
- You did not stop taking your blood-thinning medicine.
- You have recently had a heart attack.
- You have glaucoma.
- You have an infection.