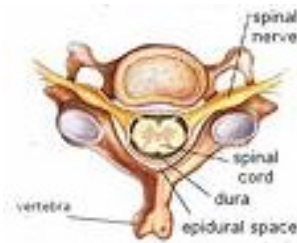


Cervical Epidural Injection Information

What is the epidural space?

The covering over the nerve roots in the spine is called the Dura. The space surrounding this Dura is the epidural space. Nerves travel through the epidural space before they travel down into your arms. The nerves leave the spine from small nerve holes. Inflammation of these nerve roots may cause pain in your neck, shoulder or arms. These nerve roots may become inflamed due to irritation from a damaged disc or from contact with bone spurs.



What is an epidural injection and why is it helpful?

An epidural injection places anti-inflammatory medicine into the epidural space to stop inflammation of the nerve roots, therefore hopefully reducing the pain in the neck, shoulders, and arms. By stopping or limiting nerve root inflammation we may be able to reduce your pain. The epidural injection may assist the injury to heal by reducing inflammation. Although not always helpful, it usually reduces pain and improves function within 3-7 days. It may provide permanent relief or provide a period of pain relief that will allow other treatments like physical therapy to be more effective.



Normal appearing epidural space.



Inflamed epidural space.

What will happen to me during the procedure?

While lying face down on a x-ray table your skin will be well cleaned. The physician will numb a small

area of skin in the back of your neck which may sting for a few seconds. Next, the physician will use x-ray guidance to direct a small needle into the epidural space. There will be pressure felt with this part of the procedure. He will then inject contrast dye to confirm that the medicine spreads to the affected nerve root(s) in the epidural space. After this, the physician will inject a combination of numbing medicine and anti-inflammatory cortisone.



What should I do after the procedure?

If you experience partial relief it may be beneficial to repeat the procedure in about two weeks. If you experience no relief, notify the office and the procedure will probably not be repeated. We may perform up to three epidurals each 2 weeks apart.

General Pre/Post Instructions

You may eat a light, but not a full meal at least 2 hours before the procedure. If you are insulin dependent diabetic do not alter your normal food intake. Take your routine medications before the procedure (such as high blood pressure and diabetes medications) except stop aspirin and all anti-inflammatory medications (e.g. Motrin/Ibuprofen, Aleve, Relafen, Daypro) 3 days before the procedure. These medicines may be restarted the day after the procedure. You may take your regular pain medicine as needed before/after the procedure. If you are on coumadin, heparin, lovenex, plavix or ticlid you must notify my office so that the timing of stopping these medications can be explained. If you are on antibiotics please notify our office, we may wait to do the procedure. If you have an active infection or fever we will not do the procedure. You will need to bring a driver with you. You may return to your current level of activities the next day including return to work.