



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Celiac Plexus Block

When is a celiac plexus block used

A celiac plexus block is used for pain control. This procedure blocks the nerves which come from the pancreas, liver, gall bladder, stomach and intestine. A celiac plexus block consists of injections of a local anesthetic, steroid or ethy-alcohol (phenol). The use of alcohol, called a neurolytic block, destroys the nerves. A trial block is done, using a local anesthetic, before a neurolytic block is performed. If you get short term pain relief from the local anesthetic then a neurolytic block is done.

What happens during a celiac plexus block?

You will need to eat a light breakfast the morning you are scheduled to have the nerve block. Take all medicines that you normally take each morning. It is important to arrange for someone to drive you home after the block. We will not perform the block unless there is someone present to drive you home. Tell your doctor about all allergies and current medicines; especially any blood thinners like Coumadin®.

A celiac plexus block is done in the CT scan room. You will be asked to lie face down on the CT scan table. An IV will be started. Using x-ray guidance, a needle is advanced to the correct location. The local anesthetic, with or without the steroid, is injected and the needle is removed. The procedure takes about 30 minutes.

What are the side effects and complications

Possible side effects are:

- Right after the block you might temporarily experience low blood pressure, warmth in the legs and some tingling.
- Soreness in the back that can last for a few days.
- Watery loose bowel movements.
- Complications that rarely occur are:
 - Injury to major blood vessels,
 - Injury to nerve roots,
 - Injury to the kidney,

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- Injury to the dural cuff (the extension of membranes covering the spinal cord to nerve roots) and possible headache
- Pneumothorax (part of the lung collapses)
- Injection of medications into a blood vessel.
- What do I need to do after the procedure?
- You will need someone to drive you home. The procedure will not be done if you do not have someone to drive you home.