



## *Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

### **Epidural Steroid Injections**

An Epidural Steroid Injection is an injection of a local anesthetic into the epidural space in the back. The epidural space is located in the spine just out the sac containing spinal fluid.

#### **When is an Epidural Steroid Injection used?**

An Epidural Steroid Injection is used for back pain caused by:

- Disc problems
- Spinal stenosis
- Pain that radiates to your arms or legs.
- An acute flare up of chronic back pain
- Part of comprehensive treatment program.

#### **What do I need to do before the procedure?**

You will need to eat a light breakfast the morning of the procedure. Take your usual medications that you normally take in the morning. One peripheral IV will be placed before the injection. Tell the Doctor and Nurses about your allergies and the medications you are taking, especially blood thinners like Coumadin®. Inform the doctor and nurses about any surgery you have had or plan to have soon. No steroid shots will be administered 2 weeks before or after a Flu shot.

#### **What happens during an Epidural Steroid Injection?**

For a lumbar epidural steroid injection a local anesthesia is given to numb the skin and deeper structures surrounding the area. Once the area is numb a needle is inserted into the epidural space. After making sure that the needle is in the right place the local anesthetic and steroid will be injected.

For a cervical (neck) epidural injections you will be asked to lie face down on the X-ray room table. The area around the cervical area and deeper structures will be numbed with a local anesthesia. Once the area is numb, a needle is inserted which is directed under X-ray. When the space is reached a steroid and local anesthetic is injected.

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## **Epidural Steroid Injections** *Continued*

Right after the injection you might feel some tingling and numbness of the limbs. This is a normal feeling. The local anesthetic that is injected in the space is the reason for this. This may also take away the pain for a short time. After the local anesthetic wears off the pain might come back. But within the next few days when the steroid starts to work the pain will start to decrease.

Usually this procedure is done in a series of 3 injections 2 weeks apart. If you should require more than one series then the procedure will be repeated in 3 months.

### **What are the side effects and possible complications?**

Right after the block you might temporarily experience:

- Pain at the injection site.
- Weakness in the arms or legsx Increase in blood sugarx
- Stiff neckx Low blood pressure
- Decrease in immunity

Complications that rarely occur are:

- Bleeding
- A headache that occurs after the needle is in the spinal canal.x
- Injection of medication into a blood vessel.

### **What do I need to do after the procedure?**

You will need someone to drive you home after the block.