

WHAT IS AN EPIDURAL INJECTION?



An epidural injection is an interventional procedure designed to reduce pain and inflammation in the spine. This injection may reduce pain from a variety of spinal pain problems including intervertebral disc disease, nerve impingement, facet joint arthritis and spinal stenosis.

With fluoroscopic guidance, needles are advanced close to the epidural space of the spine. Needle tip placement is confirmed by injection of contrast dye to verify proper needle location. After correct needle position is confirmed by X-ray (fluoroscopy) the proper medications are injected. The most common medications include local anesthetics and steroid medications.

■ HOW DOES AN EPIDURAL INJECTION RELIEVE MY PAIN?

Spine pain and radiculopathy are caused by inflammation of structures in the spine. Most of our epidural injections use steroids and local anesthetics that rapidly reduce pain symptoms. These are some of the most potent pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory medications currently available. These medications have a long record of safety and effectiveness.

■ WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING THIS PROCEDURE?

After checking in for the procedure, a full history will be taken and an IV will be started. After being placed on the treatment table, intravenous sedation will be administered. The injection usually takes only several minutes. Following the procedure, you will be allowed to rest for approximately 30 to 60 minutes in the recovery area prior to discharge. Patients will not be allowed to drive home; patients are required to arrange transportation before the procedure.

■ WHEN WILL I BEGIN TO FEEL PAIN RELIEF AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Most epidural injections will provide pain reduction within 48 to 72 hours. The length of pain reduction depends on multiple factors, including the age of the patient, the underlying anatomical problem, occupational and recreational activities, and adherence to a formal physical therapy program.

■ WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED RECOVERY FROM THE PROCEDURE?

Recovery from the procedure is short. You may have minor discomfort at the injection site, which usually resolves within 24 hours. If you continue to have symptoms, please refer to the discharge instructions. You may also call if there are any concerns.