

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES OF NORTH GEORGIA

Pain Clinic Director:
Steven M. Lobel, MD
Board Certified:
PM&R and Pain Medicine

Program Director:
Medical Associates
Pain Medicine Fellowship

Specializing in Interventional Spine and Sports Medicine

Epidural Steroid Injection

Epidural steroid injections (ESI's) have been found to be very effective in relieving pain. A steroid is a potent, anti-inflammatory agent that, when injected into the epidural space surrounding the spinal nerves, may reduce the swelling of these nerves and the pain which often accompanies a back or neck disorder.

Preparing For Your Epidural Steroid Injection

Notify your physician if you regularly take a blood-thinning medication including aspirin, Plavix, or Coumadin, or if you develop a fever, an infection on any part of your body, or flu symptoms before your scheduled appointment.

What To Expect

When you arrive at the Pain Clinic, a nurse will escort you to an examining room and ask you to disrobe and put on a hospital gown. The nurse will then ask several medical history questions to make certain you have no allergies to any of the medications being used. You will be placed face down on an X-ray table and then the injection site will be scrubbed with iodine, alcohol, or other agents depending on allergies. The doctor will then inject a local anesthetic into the appropriate area, which may cause momentary discomfort and a slight burning sensation. After the area is numb, the doctor will insert a needle through the skin into the epidural space and inject the steroid. You will feel pressure while the doctor injects the steroid. The nurse will then place a band-aid on the injection site and check your blood pressure and pulse. Some patients experience feelings of anxiety while undergoing this procedure. If you experience such feelings, your blood pressure and pulse may become slightly increased. If so, the nurse will continue to monitor you for approximately 30 minutes while you sit or lie down. This short period of rest will help your blood pressure and pulse return to normal. The epidural steroid injection procedure takes approximately 5 to 15 minutes to complete.

After Your Injection

You may resume your normal activities immediately following the procedure. You may drive yourself home, although some patients are more comfortable allowing someone else to do so. You may experience some soreness at the injection site for the first 24 hours after receiving your epidural steroid injection. If so, applying ice will help reduce your discomfort. If you are currently undergoing physical therapy, you can resume your stretching and strengthening exercises immediately after receiving your injection, unless your physician or physical therapist advises you otherwise. The day after you receive your injection, you may remove the small adhesive bandage and wash the injection site with soap and water. If you experience a headache, redness, swelling, tenderness, or warmth at the injection site, notify your physician.

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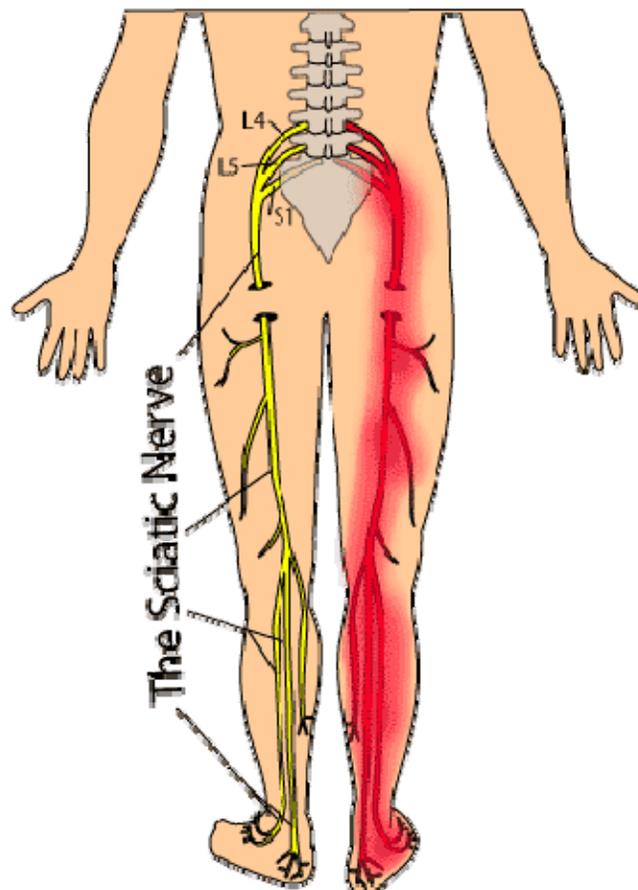
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Commonly Asked Questions

Will I receive more than one epidural steroid injection? One epidural steroid injection provides long-lasting pain relief for many patients, especially those who are undergoing physical therapy and are diligent about observing good posture. It can take six to 10 days before you begin to respond to the steroid. If you experience complete pain relief after one injection, you will not undergo additional injections. Pain relief can last for many months or years. If you do not respond to the first injection, a second injection will be administered about two weeks after your first injection. If there is no improvement after two injections, your physician may suggest alternative treatments. Are there any complications associated with an epidural steroid injection? The epidural steroid injection has a long history of safe use. There is only a 1 percent chance that you will suffer from a brief headache after receiving an epidural steroid injection. Also, whenever skin is punctured, there is a slight chance it may become infected, resulting in redness, swelling, tenderness, or warmth at the injection site.



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