

Lumbar Sympathetic Block

When your procedure has been cleared and scheduled you will be called to be reminded of the exact time and date that you are to appear at the surgical center.

We would like to remind you that you must have a driver with you and that you must not drive the day of your procedure or operate any heavy equipment. You must not eat or drink anything but water 4 hours prior to your procedure.

When you arrive at the surgical center, you will sign paperwork and then be interviewed by a nurse. The nurse will ask you about your medical conditions and the medications that you take. After she is finished with the interview, if necessary, you will be placed in a gown and an IV will be placed.

When it is time for you to have your injection, you will be transported into the procedure room where you will meet your doctor. Your doctor will ask you about how you are doing and will also verify the injection that you are scheduled for, including which side would be the appropriate side to inject if this is an issue. After this has been accomplished you will be helped onto a special cushioned table and positioned on your stomach. A monitor will be placed over your finger that will tell us about the oxygen that you have in your blood as well as your heart rate and EKG stickers will be applied to use so we can monitor your heart rhythm and heart rate.

PROCEDURE:

After you are comfortable, your back will be prepped with Betadine and draped in a sterile manner. Using the x-ray camera we will numb up the skin in 2 locations on the same side as your leg or foot pain, after which, a needle will be placed through the numbed skin and directed in such a fashion as to arrive next to the vertebral bodies, typically at L2 and L4 (see diagram). Once the positions of the needles are confirmed using dye, local anesthetic is injected at these 2 levels and checked under the x-ray machine.

If this is your first lumbar sympathetic block the IV sedation that is provided to you will be minimal. The reason for this is it is important to see if the procedure is helpful in the control of your leg. If we gave you a lot of IV sedation, we would not know if you felt better because of the IV sedation or the block.

At the end of your procedure, the nurses will assist you in getting off of the injection table and back into your recliner. They will wheel you out of the procedure room and into the recovery area where equipment will again be placed on you to monitor your heart rate and the amount of oxygen in your blood. In the recovery room the nurses will observe how you are doing until you are able to be alert and able to stand and walk.

After the Lumbar Sympathetic ganglion block, we expect the leg on the side that was blocked to get very warm and sometimes a pink color is noted in the skin. The only true proof of the block being performed accurately is that your leg or foot on the same side that was blocked should be substantially warmer than the other leg or foot.

If this is your first sympathetic block, you be asked to evaluate whether you think the block has been helpful in decreasing the sensitivity you experience in the leg or foot or the pain that you experienced with movement or touching the leg or foot. It is important to contact the Pain Center and let them know the effect of the block. If the block has been very helpful to you, we will repeat it. If it has not been of significant help, we will see you in the office to reevaluate you.

We ask you to carefully evaluate whether this sympathetic block is helpful in controlling some or most of the pain that you are experiencing. The first sympathetic block typically lasts only a day or two. When they are repeated in a series, the benefit of the block typically lengthens to the point where you will no longer need the blocks.

Prior to discharge you will be provided with an instruction sheet that will inform you of possible concerns after your injection. If you are frightened or think that you are having a reaction to the injection or medications, you should call our office and speak with someone on staff who will assist you. In the event that you believe that there is a very serious side effect occurring you should call 911 and get immediate care.

