

# Medial Branch 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 you must not drive the day of your procedure or operate any heavy equipment. Additionally, 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 given a small amount of IV sedation your back will be prepped and draped in a sterile manner.

It is important, as you will recall, to use only very minimal sedation for this block as it is a TEST block. It is important for us to be able to evaluate the effect of the block. If we give you too much sedation, the result after the block might be confusing as we would not know if the benefit you received was due to the IV sedation we gave you, or the block itself. For this reason, only a small amount of IV sedation is provided.

Using x-ray visualization, the skin, overlying the area where the nerve is that we wish to anesthetize, is injected with a small amount of local anesthetic. The block is typically done at 3 levels so the skin will be numbed over each area. A second needle is then placed, through the numbed skin, directly onto the bone where the small nerve passes that goes into the facet joints (see diagram). With the needle visualized at this target, a small amount of very powerful local anesthetic is injected at each level. The needles are subsequently removed.

At the end of your procedure, the nurses assist you in getting off of the injection table and back into your recliner. The nurses 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 and this will be a time. As soon as you are able to safely drink something a nurse will provide you with some juice. You will be observed until you are able to be alert and able to stand and walk.

Generally speaking after you leave the surgical center we do not limit your activities significantly other than to tell you that you should not drive or operate heavy machinery.

You have received a test block and it is important that you evaluate it to see if it, in fact, takes away a substantial amount of your pain. We encourage you, at this point, to perform activities that would normally be uncomfortable for you. Clearly, if the block is helping you, you will be able to walk further or bend in different ways that would normally cause you to experience pain. It is imperative that you evaluate the effect of this block as we will need to understand whether it is worthwhile moving forward with a second procedure designed to destroy the nerve that we have just anesthetized.

In the event that this block provides dramatic improvement for you, you are to call the Pain Center and tell them this so that we can make arrangements for the next procedure to take place. In the event that the block does not dramatically decrease your back pain, we will need to see you in the office and create a different treatment plan for you.

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 immediately 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.

