

# CAUDAL CATHETER/RACZ PROCEDURE

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is Caudal Catheter/RACZ procedure?** *This procedure is used to break up some of the scar tissue around entrapped nerves in the epidural space of spine, so medications such as steroids may reach the affected areas. This allows the medications to reach affected nerves so pain and other symptoms may be diminished.*

**What causes this scarring (adhesions)?** *Scarring is most commonly caused from bleeding into the epidural space following back surgery and the subsequent healing process. It is a natural occurrence following surgical intervention or injury. Sometimes scarring can also occur when a disk ruptures and its contents leak out.*

**How is the procedure performed?** *The patient starts on their stomach and will be monitored carefully throughout the procedure. The skin on the back will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and the procedure performed. The procedure requires a series of two injections. First a catheter (small tubing) is inserted in the epidural space up to the area of scarring. This is done in the operating room under sterile conditions using x-ray guidance. This catheter is secured to the skin with dressings and tapes. The first injection of medications is made via this catheter. After the procedure, the patient is placed on their back or on your side. The patient is then sent home with the catheter in place.*

*The second injection is done the following day along with removal of the catheter.*

**What is actually injected?** *The injections consist of a mixture of local anesthetic and steroid medication, as well as a x-ray contrast used to visualize the scarring.*

**Will the injection hurt?** *The procedure does involve inserting a needle through the skin and deeper tissues so there is some discomfort involved. However, the patient will receive anesthetic medications which make the procedure easier to tolerate. Your doctor will also numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic.*

**What should I expect after the injection?** *Immediately after the injection you may experience your legs feel heavy and/or numb. Also, you may notice your pain is gone or diminished, this is due to the local anesthetic injected and will last only a few hours.*

**How long will the medication last?** *The immediate effect is usually from the local anesthetic injected. This wears off in a few hours. The steroid starts to work about 5-7 days after the injection and its effect can last several days to a few months.*

**What are the risks and side effects?** *As with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and possibility of complications. The most common side effect is pain-which is temporary. For specific risks please speak with a nurse in the office.*

**Note:** This procedure cannot be performed if you have an active infection, flu, cold, fever, or very high blood pressure. Please make us aware of these conditions.

**We hope this information helps.**

**Please feel free to contact us for any additional concerns you might have.**