

LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Lumbar Sympathetic Block? *A Lumbar Sympathetic block is an injection of local anesthetic in the sympathetic nerve tissue. The nerves are located on the either side of the spine, in the back.*

What is the purpose of a Lumbar Sympathetic Block? *The injection blocks sympathetic nerves. This may in turn reduce pain, swelling, and sweating changes in the lower extremity and improve mobility.*

How long does the injection take? *The actual injection takes only a few minutes; however the total time you are at the hospital or other facility can be 3-5 hours*

What is actually injected? *The injection usually consists of a local anesthetic and steroids.*

Will the injection hurt? *The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and deeper tissues. There is some discomfort involved. However, the physician numbs the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle before inserting the actual block needle.*

Will I be sedated for this procedure? *Yes. This procedure is done under local anesthesia. Most of the patients also receive other medications which make the procedure easier to tolerate. The amount of sedation given generally depends upon patient tolerance.*

How is the injection performed? *It is done with the patient lying on their stomach. The patients are carefully monitored. The skin on your back is cleaned with antiseptic solution and the injections performed. Fluoroscopy (x-ray) is used to guide the needle into the proper position.*

What should I expect after the injection? *Immediately after the injection, you may feel your lower extremity getting warm. In addition, you may notice your pain may be gone or quite less. This is due to the anesthetic. You may also notice some weakness and/or numbness in the leg—which is temporary.*

What should I do after the procedure? *You will need a ride home. We advise the patients to take it easy for a day or so after the procedure. Perform activities as tolerated.*

Can I go to work the next day? *You can return to work within a week. You may feel soreness at the injection site.*

How long will the effect of the medication last? *The local anesthetic wears off in a few hours. However, the blockade of sympathetic nerves may last for many more hours, days or even longer.*

How many injections do I need to have? *If you respond well to the first injection, you may be recommended for another procedure called Radiofrequency Thermo-coagulation. It provides longer relief.*

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 other 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.