

SPINAL INJECTIONS: PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

You have been referred for a spinal injection. These injections are performed in an out-patient setting at Hackensack University Medical Center or at Vanguard Surgical Center. Please take the time to read these guidelines carefully, so that you are informed about the procedure.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT EPIDURAL BLOCKS

Therapeutic injections (also called “epidural blocks”) involve placing a small needle into the area of your spine where the pain is located and then injecting a numbing and/or an anti-inflammatory medication into the area. You will be lying on your stomach during this procedure. *These spinal injections take 15-20 minutes to complete.*

Dr. Implicito has performed hundreds of block injections over the course of their training and practice. The scientific community at large has performed tens of thousands more. **They are very safe procedures when properly done.**

During the injection a corticosteroid is injected to reduce the inflammation at the source of the problem, which is producing your symptoms. In general, there is about a 70 to 80% incidence of improvement or remission of symptoms for some period of time following the injection. In about 10 to 15% of the cases, the symptoms go away and never come back. Most of the time, however, the symptoms go away for a period of time and then return to some extent. This is frequently several months after the injection.

Side effects from the procedure can occur, however, serious side effects are extremely uncommon. The more common side effects are an increase in the usual amount of pain or having some new pain, which, in the vast majority of patients, will resolve within one to ten days. These reactions are called “flares” and occur in less than one out of ten injections. Adverse reactions to the corticosteroids usually do not occur and are temporary when they do occur. These include changes in menstrual regularity, headaches, euphoria, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, depression, swelling and skin rash. Serious problems such as infection or severe allergic reactions, strokes, or heart attacks can theoretically occur at an incidence of about one in ten thousand injections. Discomfort from the actual procedure is usually minimal, but depends on the specific problem. A problem called avascular necrosis of the hip may have a relationship to corticosteroid intake, but we are not aware of any case directly attributable to a block.

IF YOU ARE A DIABETIC please discuss your injection with your primary physician due to the possibility of post-injection, steroid induced increase in blood sugar.

A block procedure requires exposure to x-rays. **If there is ANY CHANCE THAT YOU MAY BE PREGNANT, inform the technologist and/or the doctor. You SHOULD NOT have the procedure done.**

PLEASE NOTIFY DR. IMPLICITO AND THE HOSPITAL STAFF IF YOU HAVE A FEVER OR IF YOU HAVE IODINE, LATEX OR OTHER ALLERGIES.

DIET RESTRICTIONS:

It is not necessary to fast. You may feel free to eat prior to your procedure.

MEDICATIONS:

PLEASE READ THE MEDICATION GUIDELINES LIST CONTAINED ON THIS WEBSITE CAREFULLY...

Aspirin, products that contain aspirin, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, act as blood thinners and may cause bleeding problems after epidural block injections.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU STOP TAKING CERTAIN MEDICATIONS PRIOR TO YOUR PROCEDURE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND DIRECTION OF YOUR PRIMARY PHYSICIAN OR SPECIALIST.

PLEASE REFER TO THE MEDICATIONS GUIDELINES DOCUMENT CONTAINED ON THIS WEBSITE...*If you are taking any of the listed medications, please check with your prescribing physician prior to discontinuing them.*

In general, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications should be discontinued 4 days before the procedure, while aspirin-containing medications should be discontinued 7 days before the procedure. **Do not discontinue all of your medications.** *Ask your physician if you are not sure about stopping prescribed medications.*

IF YOU ARE TAKING ANY BLOOD-THINNING PRODUCTS (PLAVIX, COUMADIN, ETC.), YOU MUST CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN BEFORE STOPPING THE MEDICATION.

TRANSPORTATION:

You are permitted to drive after the procedure, however you will not be discharged from the facility until all numbness from the anesthetic has subsided, usually this takes about an hour or so after your injection is performed. If someone else is driving you, you will be discharged to leave immediately after your injection is performed.

PLEASE BE SURE TO BRING ANY AND ALL X-RAYS, CAT SCANS, OR MRI SCANS WITH YOU THE YOUR PROCEDURE.

POST INJECTION PRECAUTIONS:

Take it easy for the next 12 hours. Do not resume vigorous exercise for at least 48 hours. **You may have increased discomfort before you feel better.** Please call our office if you experience itching, rash, shortness of breath or stomach upset. Some possible side effects include flushing or a feeling of warmth for several days, fluid retention, weight gain, elevated blood pressure, transient decrease in immunity, or elevated blood sugar. **Call 911 if you experience a medical emergency.**

FOLLOW-UP WITH DR. IMPLICITO:

Dr. Implicito will see you in follow-up at our office about 10 days to 2 weeks after your injection is performed. *Please be sure to schedule this follow-up appointment when scheduling your injection.*

If you have any questions regarding your upcoming procedure please feel free to contact our office at 201-251-7725.