

Pain Solutions

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Nerve Block Injections



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Nerve blocks are used for pain treatment and management. Many times a group of nerves that are causing pain to a specific region of the body can be blocked with an injection. Nerve blocks are injections of anesthetic or anti-inflammatory medication to numb a group of nerves. The purpose of the injection is to turn off the pain signal coming from a specific location in the body or to decrease inflammation in that area.

Who is a candidate?

Patients who suffer from acute or chronic pain may have a nerve block injection to achieve temporary pain relief. The source of the pain is usually the spine, neck, buttocks, legs or arms. Delivering a nerve block injection allows relief from constant irritation, allowing the damaged nerve time to heal itself. Although there are many different kinds of nerve blocks, this treatment is not always an option. If the pain is not related to pain in a single or small group of nerves, this treatment option may not be right for you.

What are the different types of nerve blocks?

There are different types of nerve blocks depending on the location of your pain. These include:

- Trigeminal nerve block (face)
- Ophthalmic nerve block (eyelids and scalp)
- Supraorbital nerve block (forehead)
- Maxillary nerve block (upper jaw)
- Sphenopalatine nerve block (nose and palate)
- Cervical epidural, thoracic epidural, and lumbar epidural block (neck and back)
- Cervical plexus block and cervical para-vertebral block (shoulder and upper neck)
- Brachial plexus block, elbow block, and wrist block (shoulder/arm/hand/elbow/wrist)
- Subarachnoid block and celiac plexus block (abdomen and pelvis)

What are the benefits of a nerve block?

- Temporary pain relief
- Temporary reduction of inflammation in the region of the spine causing pain
- May help the doctor identify a more specific cause of pain
- Better ability to function in daily life without the restrictions previously caused by pain

What happens during treatment?

The nerve block procedure is done on an outpatient basis and usually only takes a few minutes. The physician will identify the spot where the needle needs to be placed. The injection site will be cleaned using antiseptic solution and then the needle will be inserted using fluoroscopy to deliver the medication as close to the nerve as possible.

What happens after treatment?

After the procedure you will wait in recovery for approximately 15 – 30 minutes to let the medication take effect and make sure there are no side effects. The majority of patients can walk around immediately after the procedure and typically resume full activity the following day. In order to ensure safety it is required that you have someone to drive you home. Patients typically resume full activity the day after their procedure. There may be soreness around the injection site that can be relieved by using ice and a mild analgesic such as Tylenol.

How long does it last?

After the injection, there should be a sensation of pain relief to the injected area. Each individual is different therefore some receive relief that lasts a few weeks, or even permanently. Some patients only need one injection to get relief, while others need up to three. If the nerve block does not relieve any pain, your physician will most likely recommend a different treatment approach.

