

Patient Information

CT Guided Epidural Injection

What is an epidural injection?

The epidural space is the area between the bones (vertebra) and the fluid filled sac that contains the nerves in the spine. Epidural injections are comprised of local anaesthetic and anti-inflammatory drug (steroids) into the epidural space. The aim of the injection is twofold. Firstly, if your pain is relieved by the numbing medicine (local anaesthetic) then it confirms that this is the correct level causing your pain. Secondly, the anti-inflammatory medicine (steroid) will reduce the surrounding inflammation and hence your symptoms.

Preparation

No preparation is required although it is important to contact us and let us know if you are taking any blood thinning medications or have an iodine allergy prior to the appointment.

We require you to come with **someone to assist you and drive you home after the procedure**. Public transport is not acceptable. *Should your circumstances be that you do not have anyone to accompany you, please contact us immediately to discuss.*

How long will it take?

The procedure usually takes about twenty (20) minutes.

What to expect

The injection will be performed by a radiologist who will be assisted by our radiographers.

You will be asked to change into a gown and lie face down on the CT table. A series of planning scans will be taken so that the exact position for the injection can be marked on your back.

The skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and the radiologist will inject the area with a local anaesthetic to numb the region and then a short series of scans are performed to confirm the injection will go into the correct point for maximum relief.

Once the correct position has been acquired, the anti-inflammatory and the local anaesthetic agent will be injected.

After Your Examination

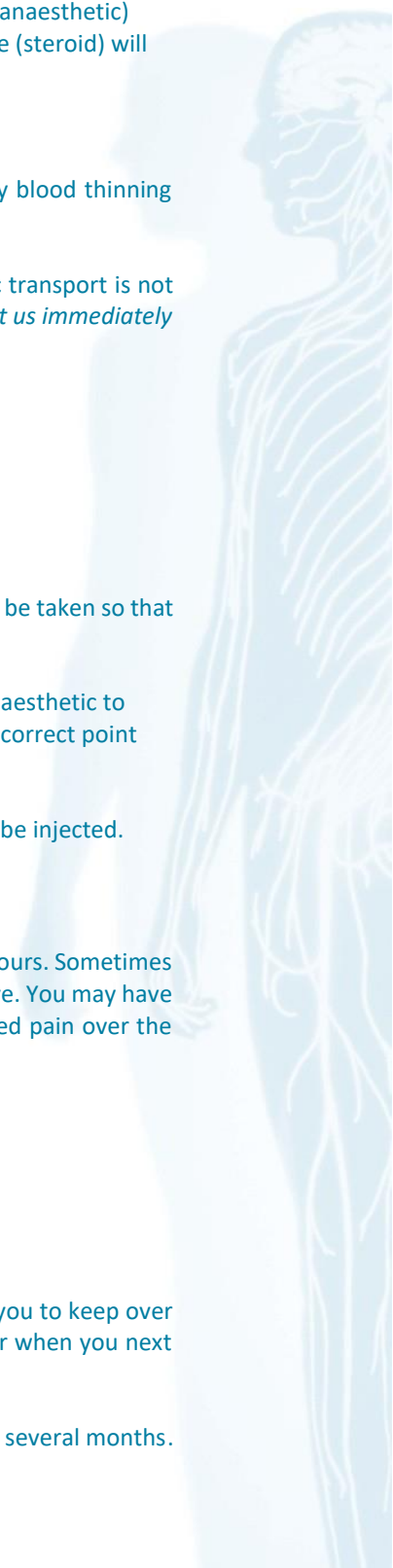
The injection may give you immediate relief of pain due to the local anaesthetic, this will last only a few hours. Sometimes you may notice some weakness of your leg as the local anaesthetic blocks the pain and action of the nerve. You may have a sore back for a day or two, but after that the steroid should take effect and you may notice decreased pain over the next two (2) weeks.

For your comfort it is recommended you:

- Take it easy for the next forty-eight (48) hours
- Resume your normal activities as limited by pain
- You may apply ice to the affected area
- You may continue with physiotherapy etc.

It is important to keep a record of your progress so we have provided a 'Post Procedure Pain Diary' for you to keep over the next two (2) weeks after the procedure. You should take this with you to report back to your doctor when you next see them so they can assess how successful this procedure was for you.

Any beneficial effect may eventually wear off. This is very variable, but the beneficial effect usually lasts several months. The area can be injected again if required.



Possible Side-Effects and Complications

In general, this is a very safe procedure, but there are some potential complications that may occur.

The main ones include:

- The injection may irritate the joint further and the symptoms may be aggravated for a day or so before the steroid starts having its effect.
- Facial redness, which occurs over the next twenty-four (24) hours, that is a side effect of the steroid medication, it settles over the next twenty-four (24) to forty-eight (48) hours. You may also feel restless, irritable in your mood and have some difficulty sleeping for 1-2 days.
- Bruising of the skin or bleeding into the soft tissues or joint.
- Numbness or weakness occasionally occurs in the leg on the same side as the injection and you may temporarily experience some numbness in the injected area from the local anaesthetic. This will wear off after several hours. **If you experience these, you should take extra care moving around after the injection so as not to fall.**
- Increased blood sugar levels in diabetics.
- Unfortunately, some patients have no relief of symptoms.

Rarer complications may include:

- Allergic reaction.
- Infection at the needle site. This would be identified by a warm sensation in the area of the injection or a redness of the skin in the area of the injection.
- Local skin discolouration, local loss of pigment, or skin contour change at the site of injection. This may last months or be permanent.
- In exceptionally rare circumstances, permanent neurological damage can occur.

Questions?

You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions of the technicians or radiologist at the time of your procedure, however if you have any queries prior to the appointment, please feel free to contact us by phone or email – 02 9170 4500 or contact@nsrnm.com.au

If you have any questions regarding **why** the injection is required, these should be directed to your specialist or the doctor looking after you. We are happy to re-schedule your booking so you can discuss it with your doctor.

