

What is an Epidural Steroid Injection? This is an injection of an Anti-Inflammatory Steroid into the Epidural Space at any level on the Spinal Column: Cervical, Thoracic, Lumbar or Caudal. (See Illustration 1) The Epidural Space is a layer of fat that surrounds the Spinal Column.

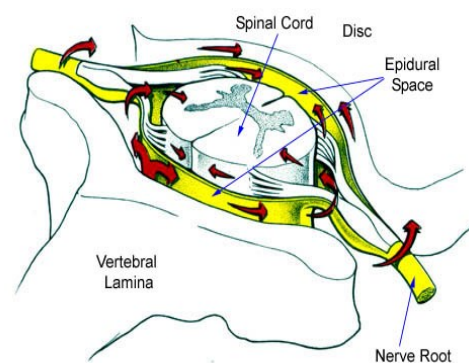
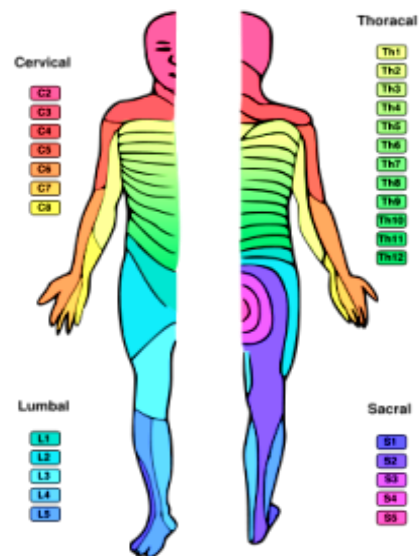
When is an Epidural Steroid Injection Used? The Injection is commonly used in the management of Symptoms of the Nerve Root Irritation caused by disorders of the Spine. These Symptoms can include Pain, which can shoot down the leg or arm, Numbness, Tingling, Burning or Weakness. Nerve Root Irritation can be caused by problems such as Herniated Discs, Arthritis, Trauma, Spinal Stenosis, Postherpetic Neuralgia, Diabetic Neuropathy or other various Conditions. When other treatments such as rest, Physical Therapy, or Oral Medications do not completely improve symptoms and Epidural Steroid Injection (ESI) may be considered. The goal of an ESI is to provide pain relief by reducing the Inflammation of the Nerve Roots as they exit the spine. An ESI will not correct the preexisting condition but may improve the level of pain. It is not unusual for someone to need more than 1 Injection (usually a series) to get a long term benefit.

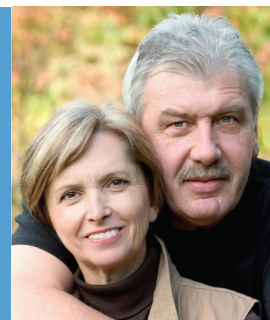
What Medication is Injected? The injection consists of a mixture of an Anti-Inflammatory Steroid, usually Methylprednisolone or Triamcinalone mixed with normal Saline. In some cases, a local anesthetic, Marcaine or Lidocaine, will be injected as well.

How Long Does The Injection Take? The actual injection only takes a few minutes, but you may be in the procedure area from 60 to 90 minutes. This includes signing Consent Forms, Monitoring the Vital Signs and placement of an IV access needle in your hand, as well as a 30 minute recovery period where we continue to monitor your Vital Signs.

Is There Pain Involved With This Injection? The injection does involve inserting a needle into the skin, which can cause discomfort. Your skin and deeper tissues will be numbed using a very small needle before the injection is given. You may also choose to receive intravenous sedation before the procedure. Certain procedures require an IV Access in your hand even if you choose not to have sedation.

How is the Injection Performed? The injection is done while you are lying on your abdomen or side. During the procedure a nurse will monitor your Blood Pressure, Pulse and Oxygen Level. The doctor will clean your skin with an antiseptic and the injection is performed using Fluoroscopic X-Ray Guidance. After the injection the Antiseptic is





cleaned off and you will be placed on your back or side and taken to recovery. You will be given something to drink and a light snack while your Vital Signs are continued to be monitored.

What should I Expect After The Injection? Immediately after the Injection, your legs may feel slightly heavy or numb for a short time. Your usual pain will return and your back will feel sore for a couple of days. You may even have a little more discomfort than usual at first, because of the mechanical irritation of the needles used in the Procedure, as well as irritation from the Steroid itself. You should begin to notice pain relief by the third day. Look for a slow, subtle change rather than a sudden, dramatic reduction of pain.

What should I do After The Procedure? If you had Sedation, you must have a responsible adult drive to take you home. Even though you may feel alert, you must not drive for 24 hours after receiving the Sedation. We advise you to go home the day of the Procedure and rest. Take it easy for a day or two, performing activities that you can tolerate. You may apply Ice to your back for the first 24 hours. Do not apply heat to the injected area for 24 hours. This includes Hot Tubs, Jacuzzis or hot Baths/Showers. After 24 hours you may apply Ice or Heat, as you desire to increase comfort.

How Many Injections Will I have? We usually plan for a series of three injections done two weeks apart. However, your Doctor may feel a different plan is more appropriate for you. In a six month period, we usually limit the number of injections to three. This is because the medication injected can last for about 6 months. If you did not benefit from three injections, it is unlikely that further injections will provide more help. In addition, further injections increase the likelihood of side effects from the Medication.

What are the Risks Involved and Possible Side Effects? There is some risk involved with any procedure, though an Epidural Steroid Injection is generally safe. The biggest risk, is a Spinal Puncture that causes a Headache, infection, bleeding inside the Epidural Space that can cause Nerve Damage, worsening of symptoms or allergic reaction to the Medication. Side effects related to the Medication include weight gain, short term elevation of Blood Sugar (mainly in Diabetics), fluid retention for 1 to 2 weeks, and suppression of the body's own natural production of Cortisone.

How Much Relief Will I Get and How Long Will It Last? The effects differ from person to person. Most patients receive good relief for some weeks or even several months after the injection. Some patients do not receive any relief in their pain and may even have an increase in pain. The best results are usually obtained in patients who have exhibited their symptoms for a short period of time, however some patient with long standing symptoms get relief.

Is There Anyone Who Should Not Consider the Injection? If you are allergic to any kind of Medication used (Methylprednisolone, Triamcinalone and Marcaine), if you are on Blood Thinning Medication and you have not stopped taking it before the injection, if you are on Antibiotics, have an elevated temperature, ill on the day of injection or if you have an infection of any kind this injection will not be performed.

Please call us if you have any further questions at 941-917-4500.