

Cervical epidural injection

What is a cervical epidural injection?

A cervical epidural injection is an interventional procedure that is designed to reduce pain and inflammation in the cervical spine, and pain that extends to the shoulders and upper extremities. This pain may be caused by a variety of cervical pain problems including intervertebral disc disease, nerve impingement and arthritic facet joints.

With x-ray guidance (fluoroscopy), a special needle is advanced into the epidural space of the cervical spine. Needle tip placement is confirmed by injection of contrast (dye) to verify proper needle location and lack of vascular uptake. After correct needle position is confirmed by fluoroscopy, injection of the medications then takes place. Medications injected usually include Lidocaine and Kenalog.

How does a cervical epidural injection relieve my pain?

Most cervical spinal pain and pain that radiates into the upper extremities is caused by inflammation of the structures of the cervical spine. An epidural injection places several medications on, or in close proximity to these spine "pain generators." Lidocaine is a local anesthetic that can rapidly reduce pain symptoms. Kenalog is one of the most potent anti-inflammatory medications currently available. Both of these medications have a long record of safety and effectiveness.

What can I expect during the procedure?

After checking in at the Surgery Center, you will be interviewed by the admission nurse who will take a full history, then start an IV. You will be seen by the medical staff of the Arizona Pain Clinic prior to the procedure, at which time you will have the opportunity to have all your questions answered.

After being placed on the treatment table, intravenous sedation will be administered to make the procedure as comfortable as possible. The injection usually takes only several minutes. Following the procedure, you will be allowed to rest for approximately 30 minutes in the recovery area prior to discharge. You must have a responsible adult take you home.

When will I begin to feel pain relief and how long will it last?

Most epidural injections will provide pain reduction within 48-72 hours. The length of pain reduction depends on multiple factors including the age of the patient, the underlying anatomical problem, occupational activities and adherence to a formal physical therapy program.

What is the anticipated recovery from the procedure?

The recovery from the procedure is short. You may have minor discomfort at the injection site which usually resolves within 24 hours. If you continue to have symptoms, please refer to Surgery Center discharge instructions. You also may call the Arizona Pain Clinic if there are any concerns.



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