

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

CAUDAL EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION

How we do the procedure

A caudal epidural steroid injection is typically done to treat lower back, rectal or groin pain. We will often use this approach for patients who have had prior back surgery to avoid having to inject through the scar area, since doing so significantly increases the complication rate. The injection is performed at the base of the spine just above the tail bone or coccyx. You will be lying face down on the procedure table with a pillow under your abdomen. Your back will be cleansed with betadine and a sterile drape will cover the area. The doctor will inject the skin with local anesthetic to make you more comfortable during the procedure. A needle is inserted at this location and advanced into the epidural space. An x-ray (fluoroscopy) machine will be used to guide needle placement. Once we identify the epidural space, we will inject a long-acting steroid and, in some cases, a local anesthetic agent to bathe the structures that are inflamed (disk and nerve roots) which should help to decrease your pain.

What to expect

You may have some numbness around your buttock area for a few hours. Rarely, you may have a little muscle weakness in your legs for a few hours. Once the local anesthetic has worn off, typically after several hours, your pain may return. Typically a long-acting steroid (NOT the kind that increases muscle size in athletes) is injected as well and will begin to work in 1-5 days to reduce inflammation. We will schedule for another injection in 2 weeks. If you have no pain 2 days prior to your next injection, call us and we will change your appointment to a follow-up visit. There is a limit of 3 steroid injections in a 10 month period. If no substantial effects are obtained after one or two injections, we will discuss other alternatives with you.

Risks

The risks include bleeding, infection and a reaction to any of the medications used for the procedure. We use sterile technique to avoid infections. If you are taking a "blood thinner" (anticoagulant), we will give you special instructions before the procedure to avoid excess bleeding.

You could experience a spinal headache, but this is rare and easily treated.

Safety Precautions

Since your ability to drive may be impaired for a few hours, we ask that you have someone drive you home.

Injected steroids occasionally cause nervousness, difficulty sleeping, a flushed feeling (like hot flashes), an increased appetite, an elevated blood sugar, or a "moon face" (rounded face) for several days.