

Epidural Steroid Injection

What is the epidural space?

- The epidural space is an area immediately outside of the protective sac that contains the spinal cord. An epidural steroid injection is an injection of medication deposited into the epidural space.

Why would this injection be helpful?

- The goal of an epidural steroid injection is to provide pain relief by reducing inflammation around the nerve roots. Although the injection will not correct a preexisting medical condition (i.e. spinal stenosis, herniated or bulging discs, arthritis, etc.), it may improve the level of pain and function.

Risks and side effects?

- Your provider will discuss risks and side effects with you at the time the procedure is ordered.
- Common short term side effects may include numbness, weakness, or increased pain. Although very rare, dural puncture and spinal headache are risks.

What happens during the procedure?

- You must arrive 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appt. The nurses will ask you medical questions, have you sign your consent, and review your medications.
- The procedure is done under x-ray guidance. You will likely lay on your stomach.
- The nurse will monitor your vital signs throughout your procedure.
- Your skin will be washed with an antiseptic solution and may be numbed with a local anesthetic. This may feel like a stinging or burning sensation. Your provider will direct a small needle into the epidural space with fluoroscopy (X-rays) guidance. A small amount of contrast (dye) is injected to ensure proper needle position. Medication (numbing medication/steroid) will be injected.

What happens after the procedure?

- You will go to the recovery room for monitoring until discharge criteria is met.
- Follow your discharge instructions. A nurse will call you the next business day after your procedure to check on you further and discuss your relief.
- Numbing medication typically wears off within several hours to a day. Steroids can take several days to a week to take effect. Each individual patient may respond differently. On average, results can last up to 2-3 months.

Different types of epidurals?

- Interlaminar: needle is inserted into the space between adjacent vertebral laminae to reach the epidural space (cervical, thoracic, or lumbar)
- Transforaminal: needle is inserted into the epidural space through the foramen on the side of the spinal canal (right, left, or bilateral/both sides)
- Caudal: needle is inserted into the tailbone area into the epidural space

**Your provider will determine which type of epidural is best for you.*