

Selective Nerve Root Block

What is a nerve root?

- Nerve roots exit the spinal cord and form nerves that travel into the arms, trunk, and legs. These nerves may become inflamed and painful due to conditions such as a herniated disc, degenerative changes, or bone spurs.
- A selective nerve root block is performed to determine whether or not a specific spinal nerve is a source of pain.

Why would this injection be helpful?

- By injecting a local anesthetic (numbing) medication, usually combined with a steroid, the inflammation may be reduced, thus alleviating the pain.
- Your provider will determine whether or not steroid is used and each individual patient may respond differently. On average, results may last up to 2-3 months.

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 occur including numbness, weakness, or increased pain.

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.
- This procedure is typically done under x-ray guidance. Ultrasound guidance may also be utilized. Your provider will decide what is best for you.
- The nurse will monitor your vital signs throughout the procedure.
- Your skin will be washed with an antiseptic solution.
- The provider will direct a small needle through the skin into the area adjacent to the nerve root with the help of X-rays or ultrasound. A small amount of contrast (dye) is injected to ensure proper needle position. Medication (numbing medication/steroid) is then injected into the area bathing the nerve root.

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.
- Keep in mind that if steroid is used, it can take several days to a week to take effect.