

Anesthesia Pain Clinic

Injections and/or Nerve Blocks for Chronic Pain

Patient Information Sheet

Please read this information carefully before your treatment.

Medications alone may not be enough to manage certain kinds of pain. Some medicines are more effective in fighting pain when they are combined with other methods of treatment. Such treatments can be Injection treatments, Nerve blocks, Physical and aquatic therapy, Electrical stimulation, Acupuncture, Psychological support or Surgery.

Injection treatments : Local anesthetics, with or without cortisone-like medicines, can be injected around nerve roots and into muscles or joints. These injections may reduce swelling, irritation, muscle spasm and pain. Examples: Trigger point injections, Epidural steroid injection, Sacro-iliac joint injection, etc.

Nerve blocks : Local anesthetics, with or without cortisone-like medicines, can be injected around nerves or a group of nerves, called a plexus or ganglion. These nerve blocks may reduce swelling, irritation, muscle spasm and pain, and may improve function. Examples: Occipital nerve block, Stellate ganglion injection, etc.

Your chances of improvement with above injections or nerve blocks are about 50%. Improvement could be temporary or long lasting and it may not be permanent, in other words, it may not cure your condition.

Side effects of treatments: These may vary with the treatment. These may include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, fainting spell, blood pressure changes, drooping eye lid, lumpy feeling in the throat, temporary leg weakness lasting up to 24 hours, temporary loss of bladder and bowel control, headache, etc.

Serious complications: These are rare, but they do happen. They are as follows lung puncture, blood in lungs, irregular heart beat, cardiac arrest, paralysis, blindness, convulsions, epidural space infection, epidural hematoma formation, total spinal anesthetic requiring intubation and ventilation in ICU, septicemia (generalized infection in the body), temporary or permanent damage to nerves, etc. All serious side effects and complications are very rare, but can happen even if an injection is performed correctly.

Complications and side effects of Steroids : These may include diabetes and hypertension, thinning of bones, compression fracture of bones, weight gain, sometimes psychosis, etc.

A final word.....

If you have any questions about nerve blocks or injections , please speak to your Anesthesiologist. Every precaution will be taken for your safety and comfort.

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