

Sympathetic Block

Sympathetic Block

A sympathetic block is a treatment to relieve pain by numbing a nerve that may be causing the pain.

The nerve receiving the numbing medicine is a sympathetic nerve. The numbing medicine will block the nerve from sending any pain signals you can feel.

The injection site depends on where you feel pain. The upper portion of the sympathetic nervous system is controlled in the neck area. The lower portion is controlled in the lumbar regional of your back.

Before the Block

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the injection because you may have some numbness that could make driving difficult.
- If you take blood thinner such as warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin, clopidogrel (Plavix®) or ticlopidine (Ticlid®):
 - Call the Patient Care Line at 651-241-7365 as soon as you schedule your appointment. You will receive special directions.
- Do not eat any solid food for 6 hours before the injection.
- You may drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before the injection.
- Take your regular medicine(s) with a small sip of water.

Your Appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

With: _____

To cancel, please call the United Pain Center at 651-241-7246 at least 24 hours before your appointment.

After the Block

- You will be in the clinic recovery room for a while so the nurses can watch to see if the injection is effective and to check for any reaction.
- Your skin temperature will be checked.
- The block may lower your blood pressure the day of the procedure.
- You may have numbness which could limit your ability to do things like lift weights, raise your hands above your head or operate machinery.
- **If you received an injection for pain in your shoulder, arm or hand:** You may have slight drooping of your face and eyelid (on the side where you received the injection). This won't last long.

(over)

- The injection site may be sore for a few days. You should ice the site three times a day for 20 minutes until the soreness is gone.

Whom To Call With Questions

Call the Patient Care Line at 651-241-7365
Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Side Effects

Infection is a potential complication. You may have any of these symptoms:

- unusual swelling
- pain that gets worse or ongoing headache
- warmth and redness in the injection area
- nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
- fever.

Depending on where your injection is, there may be other complications. Your doctor will explain these to you before the injection.