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CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE:

Maryland Back Institute Greenspring Surgery Center Comprehensive Arthritis Institute
Sports Medicine Center Center for Complementary Medicine

Spinal Injection Information

Your doctor has requested that you have a spinal injection. There are many different kinds of injections, including epidurals, nerve blocks, facet or sacroiliac joint injections, etc. Each type of injection targets a different location in the spine. Your doctor has chosen your specific type of injection based on your history, physical exam, X-rays, and MRIs. A spinal injection is basically a cortisone or steroid injection, similar to a knee or shoulder injection, but in order to get the medicine to the correct place in the spine, X-ray guidance is used. The steroids are meant to decrease inflammation and swelling, and therefore reduce pain. The steroid medication generally begins working after 2 to 7 days, gradually reducing the inflammation and pain over the first 2 weeks. It may take 2 weeks to take full effect. The steroids usually stay in the area for 3-6 months. Sometimes one injection is enough to feel much better, but it may require a series of up to 3 injections, spaced out over time, to be the most effective.

Instructions Fore Before Your Procedure:

- **Someone must drive you home after your procedure. You may not drive.**
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- You may eat and drink normally before your procedure.
- Take your normal medications as prescribed. If you take pain medications on a daily basis, **continue to take your pain medicines** on the day of your procedure.
- ***Medication Restrictions*:** if you are currently taking blood thinners such as **Coumadin, Plavix, or Aggrenox**, you must stop taking this medication seven (7) days before the procedure. Please let us know about this medicine, and contact your primary care physician or cardiologist before stopping this medicine.

Procedure Details:

During the procedure, you will lie on your stomach and your skin will be cleansed with an antiseptic soap. Your skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic, and a small needle will be passed under fluoroscopy (X-ray guidance) to reach the target area (such as the epidural space, or a specific nerve or joint). Once the needle is in the correct position (this may be confirmed with an injection of radiologic dye), the steroid medicine is injected, the entire procedure usually takes about 15 minutes. Once your procedure is completed, you will need to stay an additional 15-30 minutes for recovery time.

Post Procedure Instructions:

You should limit your physical activity the day of your procedure. You can resume normal activity the day after your procedure, as tolerated. You may experience some bruising or tenderness at the injection site(s) and/or your pain may be worsened for a day or two after the procedure, but most people don't feel any worse. Please call our office if you experience any unusual pain symptoms, persistent weakness in your arms or legs, headache that doesn't go away with your usual headache medication, or if you develop a fever greater than 100.5 degrees.

You should make a follow-up appointment for 2 weeks after your injection. This is usually scheduled at the same time your injection is scheduled. You will be seen two weeks after your injection, usually by the Spine Team Physician Assistant. At that point, we will determine further actions (such as medications, therapy, more injections, surgery, etc.)

Injection Scheduling and Coordination: 410-377-8900 extension 1617