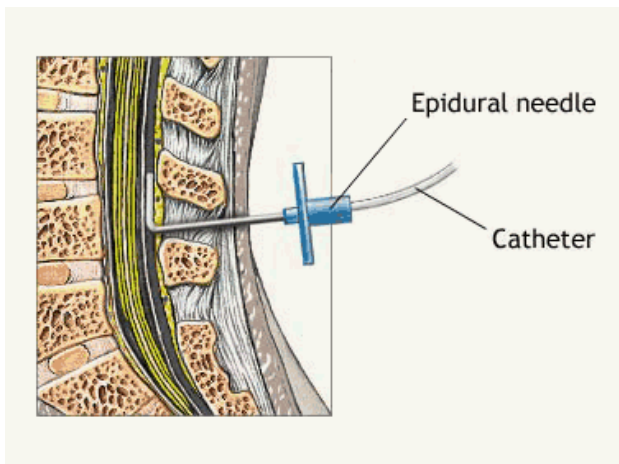# PATIENT INFORMATION: EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION

Your physician has asked that you have a procedure to help manage your pain. This procedure is referred to as an Epidural Steroid Injection as it is given the same way as an epidural would be; through insertion of a needle in your back. A steroid or anti-inflammatory medication to help control your pain will be injected directly into this space as show in the diagram.

The epidural needle will go in the epidural space, which is a space outside your spinal cord that contains fatty tissue and blood vessels. When medication is deposited here, it acts directly on the impulses that direct pain to your body. Ideally, and much is dependent on your condition, absorption etc, you can have pain relief for longer periods of time and this procedure may be repeated up to 4 times a year.

There are side effects, risks and complications associated with any procedure and you should have had this discussion with your doctor before proceeding.

Procedure

You will be brought to the hospital for this procedure and will be asked to have someone drive you and bring you home. You must be fasting at least 6 hours prior to your test.

You should take all of your regular medications except your insulin or diabetic medication, and you should have stopped your ASA (Aspirin), Plavix (clopidogrel), or Brilinta (ticagrelor) for at least 7 days prior to procedure date.

You cannot have this procedure done if you are currently on any anticoagulants such as Coumadin, Warfarin, Fragmin or Dabigatran and/or have received treatment for lung clot, leg clot, stroke or heart attack. Please notify your primary care physician or family doctor if you are taking any of these medications or treatments for further instruction.

When you arrive at the hospital, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and sit on a stretcher where the nurse will instruct you to curl your back "like a cat" while leaning over a bedside table.

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This allows the spaces in your back to open to allow the doctor to select the appropriate space to insert the needle.

The needle will then be placed in the epidural space as shown in the picture.

The medication will then be administered through the needle. Upon completion of the medication injection, the needle will be removed and the area covered with a sterile bandage.

When you Get Home

- Rest
- If you have a bandage, take it off when you go to bed
- Do not apply heat to the site
- Do not soak in a tub bath, swimming pool or hot tub for 24 hours after the injection
- You may get back to normal activities and exercise the following day.

Side Effects

You may have some side effects after the injection that would include:

- Headache – take pain medication if needed and drink plenty of fluids (caffeine may help). If the headache lasts more than 24 hours, please come back to hospital to see an anesthesiologist to discuss additional treatment for headache.
- Backache – apply ice to the site for 20 minutes, every hour as needed. Wrap the ice pack in a plastic bag and a towel before applying.

- Weak, heavy feeling or numbness and tingling in your arms and legs – this may last 6-8 hours. It is usually gone the next morning.

If you have diabetes, you may notice an increase in your blood sugar for 24 hours after injection. Adjust your insulin and check your sugar levels as needed. Call your family doctor or diabetes specialist if you are unable to control your blood sugar. If you have high blood pressure, you may also notice a temporary increase.

Go to the nearest emergency room if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Severe headache
- Fever greater than 38°C or 104°F
- Redness at the injection site
- Severe back pain
- Progressive or new numbness or weakness the next day

Medications you have received today in your epidural injection include:

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