

Center for Spine Health

Post-Procedure Instructions (Main Campus)

***Please note: These are general guidelines. Depending on your condition, your surgical team may modify these guidelines to best suit your needs.**

At-Home Instructions

The following instructions will help you know what to expect in the days following your procedure. Do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

What is a spine injection?

A spine injection is a procedure used to diagnosis and treat spine, leg, or arm pain. Radiologic imaging is used to guide a needle into the space between the bones of your spine where an anesthetic medication, with or without an anti-inflammatory medication, is injected.

What is a joint injection?

A joint injection is a procedure used to diagnose and treat joint pain. Radiologic imaging is used to guide a needle into the joint space where an anesthetic medication, with or without an anti-inflammatory medication, is injected.

After a Spine Injection or Joint Injection

Driving

- It is unsafe for you to drive after the procedure.
- A responsible adult must drive you home when you are discharged.
- You may drive the day after your procedure, unless instructed otherwise.

Diet

- You may resume your normal diet after the procedure.

Activity

- Get up slowly and walk carefully when changing from a lying or sitting position for 24 hours after the procedure. You may experience mild, temporary leg weakness.
- You may need assistance to walk if you have numbness in your legs. It is recommended a responsible adult stay with you overnight after the procedure.
- The use of gentle stretching exercises is permitted and recommended to help encourage absorption of the medication injected.
- It is unsafe to operate heavy machinery or equipment, such as pushing a lawnmower or using power tools, for the rest of the day.
- **Do not lift anything heavier than 20 pounds without assistance for 48 hours after the procedure.**

- You will be provided with a pain diary to record the location and severity of your pain to help your doctor plan your course of treatment.
- You will likely be asked to perform activities that provoke your usual pain during the first 4-6 hours after procedure to record your level of pain on a 'pain diary'.
- You may resume your normal activities 24 hours after the procedure.

If you received medications to make you drowsy (sedation):

- Do not drink alcoholic beverages or take nerve or sleeping pills for the remainder of the day. Doing so may enhance the effects of sedation that may still be present in your body.
- Do not make important decisions or sign important papers for 24 hours.
- You may have some soreness or bruising at the intravenous (IV) site and injection sites. This will go away in a few days.
- Certain sedation and pain medications may cause nausea and vomiting as a side-effect.
- You may feel sleepy or dizzy for several hours.
- You may have a brief period of amnesia (unable to remember what happened).

Medications:

- Continue taking all of your prescribed medicines after the procedure.
- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as needed to relieve discomfort unless allergic or told not to take Tylenol. Follow the directions on the package labeling and never exceed the recommended dose of 3000 mg per day. Do not mix with Alcohol.
- Your doctor may prescribe another medication for pain.
- You may take diphenhydramine (Benadryl®), loratadine (Claritin®), or fexofenadine (Allegra®) as needed to relieve facial flushing, itching, or hives unless allergic or told not to take Benadryl, Claritin, or Allegra. Follow the directions on the package labeling and never exceed the recommended dose.

Bathing and Showering Guidelines

- You may shower the day after the procedure.
- Do not swim, bathe, or soak in water for 48 hours after the procedure.

Site Care

- Keep the bandage over the site clean and dry.
- If the bandage becomes wet, soiled, or falls off, replace it with a new bandage. Remove the bandage after 24 hours.
- Apply a cool compress (no ice) to the injection site for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off while awake for comfort for 24 to 48 hours to decrease discomfort.
- The site may be temporarily black and blue.

What to expect

- Immediately after the Injection/Procedure, your pain may be better. The local anesthesia (numbing medication) will wear off in most cases within 4-8 hours and you may experience your previous level of pain again at that time. This is expected.

- If a steroid medication has been given with the injection, **it may take up to 10-14 days to start reaching its full potential/benefit.**
- You may have a mild backache or headache for 24 hours after the procedure.
- After a cervical or lumbar injection, it is not unusual to have numbness in neck, arms, back, or legs. These symptoms may last a few hours, but will gradually wear off.
- You may experience facial flushing, itching, or hives which can begin within a few hours of the injection and may last for a few days.
- If you are diabetic, you may experience elevated blood sugar. Contact your primary care physician and ask how to best manage your diabetes if sugars high after procedure.

Call your doctor if you:

- See signs of infection, such as redness, drainage, foul odor, or swelling.
- Have a temperature higher than 101.4F or 38C.
- Develop shaking chills.
- Notice leaking fluid at injection site.
- See excessive bruising, bleeding or swelling at the injection site.
- Experience persistent headache not relieved by your usual pain medications.

Go to the nearest emergency department if you:

- Experience difficulty speaking or a facial droop.
- Have numbness, tingling, weakness, or decreased sensation in limbs that continues to worsen.
- Lose bowel or bladder control.
- Have numbness of the genitalia that lasts longer than 8 hours.
- Develop neck stiffness or limb paralysis that lasts longer than 14 hours.

Follow-up

- **You should follow-up with your ordering physician/practitioner 2-4 weeks after your injection/procedure. Please schedule this follow-up appointment as soon as possible if you do not already have a follow-up visit scheduled.**

Thank you for choosing the Cleveland Clinic Center for Spine Health for your healthcare needs.

If you have any questions, please contact our office Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. After hours/weekends, please call **1.800.223.2273** and ask for the Medical Spine Fellow on call.

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