

EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION (ESI)



What is an ESI?

An epidural steroid injection (ESI) is an injection of a small dose of anti-inflammatory medication (called a glucocorticoid) into the epidural space in your cervical, thoracic or lumbar spine to relieve pain in those areas.

What are steroids?

Steroids are a generic name for glucocorticoids. The steroid injected is a man-made, synthetic drug. Steroids help to reduce pain and inflammation.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

These injections are a minor surgical procedure that is typically performed in the physician's office or an ambulatory surgery center. You should not eat or drink anything for at least 2 hours before your procedure. You should take all of your medications except blood thinners the day of the procedure unless instructed otherwise by the surgery center staff.

What should I expect during the procedure?

You will be lying on an x-ray table during the procedure. Live X-rays (called fluoroscopy) will then be taken to ensure you are properly positioned. Your neck or back will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and a sterile drape will be placed over the area to keep it clean during the procedure. A local anesthetic will then be injected into your skin to make it numb. A needle will then be inserted through the numbed skin and slowly advanced into the epidural space using fluoroscopy to guide the needle. When the needle enters the epidural space the steroid is then injected. Once the injection is completed, the needle is withdrawn and a dressing is placed over the injection site. The entire procedure will take approximately 10 to 30 minutes.

How soon after the procedure can I go home?

Your blood pressure, pulse and breathing will be monitored for 15 to 20 minutes after your procedure. Once your vital signs are stable, you will be able to go home.

Can I drive myself or do I need a ride?

Plan on having a driver bring you and take you home.

Can I have sedation for the procedure?

Yes, sedation is used for procedures performed at the surgery center.

Can the procedure make my pain worse?

Some patients will experience mild pain with the procedure that will ease up in a very short amount of time. On rare occasions, patients have experienced a prolonged increase in pain after the procedure.

Are there any restrictions following the procedure?

We ask that you not immerse yourself in water for 24 hours after the injections. This means you can shower, but do not take a bath or go swimming the rest of the day. There are no other specific restrictions on activity, however, we recommend that you "take it easy" the rest of the day and slowly resume normal activities.

Patient: _____

Date _____

Medical Staff: _____

Date _____