



PAIN MEDICINE ASSOCIATES, INC.

■ **Medhat Mikhael, M.D., Inc.**

Medical Director
Diplomate American Board
of Anesthesiology
Diplomate American Board
of Pain Medicine

PATIENT INFORMATION CERVICAL OR LUMBAR EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION

Epidural steroid injection has recently been found to be effective treatment for some patients who are suffering from low back, leg or arm pain due to nerve impingement. Commonly, nerves which supply the back, legs or arms are compressed near the spine either by a bulging disc, a bone spur or by scar tissue. This causes the nerve to become irritated, inflamed and swollen, and the more swollen it becomes, the bigger target it is for whatever is pushing against it. Cortisone is a powerful anti-inflammatory drug, and its action, therefore, is to decrease the swelling and inflammation in this nerve, thereby breaking this vicious cycle of swelling and irritation.

Before performing the injection an examination is performed. You will feel a small pin stick as a local anesthetic is administered to freeze the skin and tissues in your back where the injection takes place. The injection is then performed with little discomfort and the entire procedure takes only five or ten minutes. You are then free to go home and go about your normal activities. Relief from the injection generally takes about three days although some patients feel relief immediately and other do not feel relief up to a week or so. During the first days after the injection, it is common to feel increased back discomfort from the effect of the needle having been placed. Side effects such as temporary headaches occur in less than one percent of patients. More serious complications can occur, but they are exceedingly rare. As you have heard, Cortisone itself sometimes associated with other side effects such as a puffy face, brittle bones, etc. These problems typically occur in patients who are taking Cortisone by mouth daily for long periods of time. We have never seen any of these problems with a single dose of Cortisone or with doses widely spaced in time.

Generally speaking:

- If you show any amount of improvement of symptoms, it is likely that we will recommend that you return for a second and possibly third injection.
- If you are among the small number of people who experience absolutely no benefit, it is unlikely that we would recommend repeating the procedure.

In preparation for your epidural injection we ask that you do not eat or drink for four hours prior. You can expect to be at the Pain Management Medical Center for about sixty minutes.

If there are any further question, feel free to ask one of the pain center doctors or call the nurse at (562) 595-0060.

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