



Stellate Ganglion Block

What is a Stellate Ganglion Block?

A Stellate Ganglion Block is a procedure in which a small needle are placed into the neck under x-ray guidance. Anesthetic medicines are injected in order to numb a group of nerves called the Stellate Ganglion.

How does it help the pain?

In some pain conditions, certain nerves in the body can function improperly. By blocking the Stellate Ganglion nerves, patients can obtain pain relief of these conditions for variable lengths of time. Patients can obtain relief of neck, arm or facial pains with this procedure. Additionally, blood flow to the arm and face can be increased for a temporary period of time after the block.

Who can benefit from Stellate Ganglion Blocks?

Patients with nerve pain related to Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy can obtain relief with these blocks. Patients with poor blood flow or decreased circulation to the hand may also obtain relief.

What happens during the procedure?

An IV will be started prior to the procedure and removed at the end of the procedure.

You will lie on your back and your neck will be cleaned and draped with sterile dressings. The skin over the area is numbed and a thin needle is inserted near the spine using x-ray guidance. The procedure takes approximately 10 minutes.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be monitored in the office for 15 minutes following the procedure. The temperature of your hands will be monitored during the procedure. Rest is encouraged the day of the procedure, however, you may be asked to participate in a physical therapy program after your injection. Ice may be applied to the site of the injection. You may feel some localized discomfort over the next few days, however, this will generally resolve within 1-2 weeks. You will be seen 2 weeks after the procedure for a follow up visit.

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects which will be explained in more

detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief
- Localized pain
- Death
- Temporary hoarseness

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin[®], Ticlid[®], Plavix[®], Aggrenox[®]):

You must notify your doctor and discontinue the medicine 5 days before your injection and have appropriate laboratory studies taken prior to your injection (Eg., PT, INR).

Will I have any restrictions?

Driving is not permitted on the day of the procedure. You should not eat solid food for 3 hours after the procedure.