

Caudal Epidural Injection

A caudal epidural with or without epiduralysis is a procedure intended to reduce lower back and leg pain. This pain relief is achieved through the injection of a steroid into the lowest portion of the epidural space (the space between the membrane and spinal cord).

Conditions treated

You may benefit from a caudal epidural injection with or without lysis if you suffer from:

- Sciatica
- Spinal stenosis
- Lumbar radiculopathy
- Failed lumbar surgical syndrome
- Other chronic back problems

Duration

Less than 30 minutes

How is it performed?

Prior to the steroid injection, the area will be cleaned and local anesthetic will be used to numb the injection site. Your doctor then will insert a needle into your lower back, just above your tailbone. The doctor will be guided through the use of x-ray to ensure proper needle placement. Next, a mixture of numbing medicine and steroid is injected. If you have the epiduralysis, a catheter will be advanced through the needle. Once lysis is complete, the medication will be injected.

Prior to your procedure

It is important to continue taking blood sugar and blood pressure medications before the procedure.

In most cases, blood thinners will need to be held prior to your procedure once permission is obtained from your prescribing physician. Please see your medication handout to know when to hold and resume these medications.

What are some of the risks and side effects?

This procedure is a relatively safe, non-surgical treatment, with minimal risks of complications. Some of the most common or possible side effects are:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Spinal headache if the dura is punctured

Your doctor will discuss with you the risks and benefits, as well as other treatment options.

What to expect after the procedure

Side effects from the steroid used include flushing, elevated blood sugar, generalized headache, muscle cramps, increased appetite mood swings and difficulty sleeping. These usually resolve in 2-3 days but can last up to 2 weeks.

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You may or may not experience some pain relief immediately. The duration of the pain relief varies for every patient. Some patients will experience long-term relief after one injection, while other patients may need additional injections. Your physician may recommend additional injections as necessary.

You may resume medications and regular eating habits immediately. Please see your medication handout for instructions on resuming blood thinners or ask your doctor.

You should call your doctor if you experience a fever over 101 within 72 hours of the procedure.

