



CERVICAL, THORACIC, AND LUMBAR MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCKS

What are the medial branch nerves and why are medial branch blocks helpful?

Medial branch nerves are the very small nerve branches that communicate pain caused by the facet joints in the spine. These nerves do not control any muscles or sensation in the arms or legs. Blocking these medial branch nerves with an anesthetic temporarily stops the transmission of pain signals from the joints to the brain. If you receive temporary benefit after the medial branch block for the duration of the anesthetic (numbing) medication, your physician will have information that the facet joints in your spine may be the source of your pain. This information is used to help plan for a treatment to provide longer term pain relief.

What happens during the procedure?

You will lie face down on a procedure table. The physician will use fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance to visualize the area where the medial branch nerve lies. The physician will scrub your skin with sterile soap and place a drape on your back. The physician will direct a very small needle using fluoroscopic guidance towards the medial branch nerve. The physician will then inject a small amount of contrast (dye) to insure proper needle position and then a small amount of anesthetic medication to block the medial branch nerve.

What happens after the procedure?

Immediately after the procedure, you will go to a recovery area where you will be asked to rate your pain on a pain scale. You may be asked to move around and try to imitate something that would normally bring about your typical pain. You may be provided with a pain log in order to rate your pain relief for the next several hours after the procedure. The physician will use this information to plan for your further care. Of note, depending on the area treated, the arm(s), chest wall, or legs(s) may feel weak or numb for up to several hours after the procedure.

General Pre-op and Post-op Instructions:

- You will be scheduled at one of the facilities listed below. You will be at the facility approximately 1-1.5 hours total.
- You will be required to have a responsible adult drive you home.
- You should take your routine medications (ie. blood pressure, diabetic medications) the day of your procedure.
- If you are taking a blood thinner and are having a *cervical* procedure, please notify the office immediately.
- You must not eat any food six hours prior to your appointment.
- You may have sips of clear liquids up to two hours prior to your appointment
- You may want to wear loose, comfortable clothing to your appointment.
- You may return to your normal activities the day after your procedure, including returning to work.
- It is important that you have a high enough level of pain prior to the procedure to see if it is effective, therefore refrain from taking any medications that lessen your pain prior to the procedure.

Location of Procedures:

Desert Spine and Sports Phoenix office: 3700 N 24th Street, Ste 210. Phoenix, AZ 85016

Desert Spine and Sports Mesa office: 6634 East Baseline Rd Suite 101, Mesa, AZ 85206

Desert Spine and Sports Scottsdale office: 8670 E Shea Blvd Suite 102, Scottsdale AZ 85260

If you need to reschedule this appointment, please give 24 hours notice and call **602-840-0681**.