



CERVICAL (STELLATE GANGLION) AND LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC NERVE BLOCKS

What are sympathetic nerves and why is a sympathetic nerve block helpful?

The sympathetic nervous system is part of the autonomic nervous system which controls functions like blood flow to the extremities, sweating, heart rate, digestion, blood pressure, goose bumps and many other functions. In other words, the autonomic nervous system is responsible for controlling things you do not think about or have direct control over.

Sometimes arm or leg pain is caused by a malfunction of the sympathetic nervous system secondary to an injury. A sympathetic nerve block involves injecting anesthetic (numbing) medication around the sympathetic nerves which are located in front of the spinal column. By doing this, the system is temporarily blocked in hopes of reducing or eliminating your pain. If the initial block is successful temporarily, then additional blocks can be repeated every 7-10 days in order to relieve your pain more permanently. **What happens during the procedure?**

You will lie on an x-ray table, on your back for a cervical block and on your side for a lumbar block. The physician will use fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance to visualize the area where the sympathetic nerves lie. The physician will scrub your skin with sterile soap and place a drape on your neck or back. The physician will numb a small area of skin with anesthetic medication. The physician will direct a very small needle using fluoroscopic guidance towards the sympathetic nerves. The physician will inject a small amount of contrast (dye) to insure proper needle position and then a small amount of anesthetic around the nerve.

What happens after the procedure?

Immediately after the procedure, you will go to a recovery area where you will be monitored for approximately 15 minutes. You may notice increased warmth and redness of the arm or leg. If you have had a neck injection, you may also experience hoarseness, a lump in the throat, redness of the eye, drooping of the eyelid, nasal stuffiness and papillary constriction for a few hours. These are expected side effects and signs that the injection is working. You will not be able to drive the day of your 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 1.5 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 Coumadin or blood thinners, 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.

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**.