



Understanding Epidural Steroid Injections for Pain Relief

Epidural steroid injections are a commonly performed intervention for managing nerve pain that is moderate to severe and functionally limiting when conservative measures alone fail to control symptoms adequately.

What exactly is the epidural space? It is the space outside the membrane covering the spinal cord and nerve roots. The nerve roots in the cervical spine travel from the spinal cord into the arm; thoracic spinal nerves in the mid back innervate the trunk; and lumbar nerve roots supply sensation and strength to the leg.

Radiculopathy occurs when problems like herniated discs, arthritis, or bone spurs compress or irritate the nerve root, causing inflammation and pain in these areas. With an epidural injection, a corticosteroid medication is placed into the epidural space to deliver anti-inflammatory effects directly to the impinged spinal nerve to help relieve pain and improve function.

Benefits of Epidural Steroid Injections

- Direct delivery of medication to inflamed spinal nerve roots provides localized anti-inflammatory effects
- Shown to significantly reduce radicular pain and neuropathic symptoms caused by impingement of nerves from herniated discs, bone spurs, and arthritis
- Allows patients to progress through physical therapy and rehabilitative exercises with reduced pain
- Provides significant pain relief, potentially delaying or avoiding spinal surgery

Epidural Steroid Injection Procedure

Epidural steroid injections can provide significant pain relief. Here's what to expect on the day of your procedure:

- You will enter a special procedure room where a doctor, nurse, and x-ray technician will care for you.
- You will lie on a special table that allows the physician to use a fluoroscopic (x-ray) machine that rotates around you to perform the procedure.
- If you are receiving IV sedation, the nurse will administer it after you lie on the table.
- The physician will scrub your skin with sterile soap and place a drape over the area to maintain a clean space. The physician will then numb a small area of skin with anesthetic medication.
- After the anesthetic has been given time to be effective, the physician will then direct a spinal needle using fluoroscopic guidance into the epidural space around the nerve root.
- The physician will inject a small amount of contrast (dye) to ensure accurate needle position and then a small mixture of anesthetic and steroid around the nerve root(s).

Epidural steroid injections can provide meaningful improvements in function and quality of life. Have more questions about the procedure? Explore our in-depth FAQs by visiting <https://www.desertspineandsports.com/spine-injections/epidural-steroid-injections/>

Pre-Op and Post-Op Instructions

Pre-Op Instructions

- You will be at the facility for approximately 1-1.5 hours total.
- You will be required to have a responsible adult drive you home. If you received IV sedation, you will not be allowed to take an Uber/Lyft.
- You should take your routine medications (i.e. blood pressure and diabetic medications) on the day of your procedure. Please notify the office immediately if you are taking blood thinners.
- You must not eat any food six hours before your appointment.
- You may have sips of clear liquids up to two hours before your appointment.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing to your appointment.

Post-Op Instructions

- Immediately after the procedure, you will go to a recovery area, where you will be monitored for approximately 15 minutes.
- Your arm(s) or leg(s) may feel numb or weak for several minutes to a few hours after the procedure.
- It is important to take it easy the day of the epidural, but light activities such as walking or even working (if it is not too strenuous) are allowed.
- Driving should be avoided after an epidural if there is any numbness or weakness in the arm or leg or until the next day if you received IV sedation.

Location of Procedures

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

Desert Spine and Sports Mesa Office:
6634 E. Baseline Rd.
Suite 101
Mesa, AZ 85206

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

Desert Spine and Sports Peoria Office:
13128 N. 94th Drive
Suite 200
Peoria, AZ 85381

Desert Spine and Sports Gilbert Office:
3615 S. Rome St.
Gilbert, AZ 85297

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