



Pain Medicine Consultants

Minimally Invasive Spine Specialists

Procedure Preparation Instructions

Where do I need to go?

Our doctors perform injections and surgeries at several different surgery centers and hospitals. **Make sure you are aware of which surgery center or hospital you need to go to and the directions to that site.** The site sometimes changes due to the restrictions by your insurance company, so please double check that you are going to the correct surgery center or hospital, and that the surgery center or hospital is accepted by your insurance company. The operating room has to be reserved in advance, therefore we charge a no-show fee of \$250 to cover these costs if you fail to show or cancel less than 48-hours before your procedure date.

Do I need to bring a driver?

All of the surgery centers and hospitals require that a driver bring you and pick you up for all procedures.

What can I expect before the procedure?

Do not eat before the procedure (see below). Please stop all aspirin, ibuprofen, and other anti-inflammatory medications for 3 days before your procedure. You will check in and be admitted to the facility. Be prepared to provide your medical history to the pre-operative nurse. Bring a list of your medications. When it is time for your procedure, you will be escorted to the procedure suite and provided with sedative medications. The goal of the sedative medications is to decrease the pain and anxiety associated with the injections. Due to safety reasons, you will not be rendered unconscious or be provided general anesthesia for most procedures so do not expect this level of sedation. Once your procedure is complete, you will recover in the PACU for 15-30 minutes and then be escorted to your car for a safe trip home. See the aftercare instructions for further information on what to do after your injection. We recommend that you watch a short video describing your procedure (these videos can be found at our website: www.painmedicineconsultants.com). Bring something to read or music to listen to while you wait for your procedure at the facility. We try our best to be on time, but unexpected delays can cause surgical start times to be altered.

What should I do if I am on blood thinners or if I am on antibiotics?

Make sure that you inform us of any blood thinner or antibiotic medications that you are taking (coumadin, plavix, etc.). These need to be stopped prior to the injection. Contact your cardiologist or PCP for guidelines. If you are on Coumadin, you must have your protime (INR) checked either the day before or the day of the procedure. Please bring the results to the surgery center with you or have it faxed to our office. If you have an active infection (high fevers, productive cough, etc.) you may need to re-schedule your injection. Contact us with questions.

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What should I tell my doctor?

Make sure to let us know if you have had reactions to contrast medium in the past (from CAT scans or other injections). It may be safe for you to still be administered certain types of contrast so we need to know the type of reaction you had in the past.

What can I eat before my procedure?

You may have a LIGHT meal up until 6 hours before the procedure. You may have CLEAR FLUIDS only such as Gatorade, tea, or black coffee up until 2 hours before your procedure. If the doctor is running ahead of schedule, they may be able to perform your injection earlier so please keep this in mind. Do not take your diabetes medication if you do not plan on eating a meal. Take your blood pressure medications as usual.

Procedure Aftercare Instructions

What should I expect after the procedure?

It is very common to have increased pain both at the site of the injection and along the areas of your typical pain for several days after an injection. This should resolve and your pain relief should increase over the next week or so. The peak effect of steroid based injections may be 10-14 days after the injection. It sometimes can take a much longer period of time for inflammation to resolve and for the area to feel better. This is particularly true for pain that has been present for many years. Radiofrequency procedure may require up to 6 weeks until the full effects of the procedure are appreciated. Please keep a record of the amount of pain relief or lack thereof that you experience.

How should I get my pain better if it hurts?

Use ice applications or heating pads as well as your normal pain medications to treat any pain that you may have after your procedure. Anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen can be very helpful for acute pain relief as well.

Can I drive?

You should not drive for at least 12 hours after your procedure. Do not drive or make any binding decisions until you are certain the effects of your sedation has worn off and you do not have any weakness, etc., in the area of your injection.

What can I do the day after the procedure?

Rest the day of your procedure. Normal activity and even light exercise is general OK the day after most procedures. If you are feeling a great deal better after your procedure, make sure you do not increase your activity level so much that you suffer the following days.

Some procedures are performed in a staged fashion so you may have several procedures scheduled over weeks or months. Sometimes it is possible to get a greater degree of pain relief when several procedures are performed in succession so report to us if you experience partial, but incomplete levels of pain relief. Please let us know if you think that you may need additional injections in order to obtain the maximum levels of pain relief. Some patients would like to be seen for a follow up visit after an injection and some patients prefer not to return to the office as long as they are feeling better. Please advise us of your preferences. If you were referred to us from a local surgeon, IT IS IMPORTANT that you follow up with them in regards to if you will be having a surgery or not to address your underlying pain syndrome.

What about complications?

Serious complications from injection therapy are very uncommon. Unusual symptoms that may be a sign of a problem include new severe pain that radiates away from the site of the injection and does not go away, numbness that does not go away, and/or high fevers and chills. You need to be evaluated by a physician in person if you are having signs of a serious complication. Do not wait for a phone call or office visit if you are worried something is wrong with you. Please proceed to the emergency room or call 911 for immediate evaluation if you experience serious symptoms.

If you believe you have an emergency situation, proceed to the nearest emergency department or call 911. You may call our office and ask for the physician on call to be contacted in the case of a true emergency situation. We do not call in prescriptions or medications after hours, however, so if your pain is not controlled by your home medications, then you will have to be evaluated by a physician at the hospital if it is outside of the office operating hours.

How will I be charged?

Please note that we do our best to confirm insurance coverage and authorizations for you prior to the procedure. Some surgery centers change their contract agreements without our knowledge. Other services such as X-ray providers may send bills without our knowledge. If you receive what seems to be an excessive bill for your procedure, please notify us so we can help you to discuss it with the surgery center or X-ray company.