

## Care After Treatment

- Do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after your procedure.
- If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar more frequently. If you notice unusual fluctuations, contact your primary care provider.
- If you have high blood pressure, you may notice an increase in blood pressure or fluid retention. Report this to your primary care provider.
- Rest for 24 hours.
- Take precaution and avoid activities that may irritate your back.
- Continue your medications.
- If you have pain, apply ice for 20 minutes every 4 to 6 hours as needed.
- If you have a headache after your procedure, drink caffeinated beverages.

## Call Immediately If:

- You have a fever of 101.4 or higher
- Increased pain persists over 1-2 weeks
- You have difficulty swallowing or breathing
- You have prolonged numbness, weakness, or tingling
- You have severe headaches or stiff neck
- You are unable to urinate or have bowel movements
- You have strange or unusual symptoms (visual changes, difficulty speaking, etc.)
- You have continued, excessive, or increased swelling or bruising to the needle site
- You have signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, drainage, or warmth around the needle site

## Contact Us



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# Epidural Steroid Injections



LUCAS **LC** COUNTY  
HEALTH **HC** CENTER

An Affiliate of  UnityPoint Health

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## ESI for Pain Treatment

Epidural steroids have been safely and effectively used in the treatment of chronic neck and back pain for the last 40 years. Back and neck pain are usually treated conservatively with bed rest, physical therapy, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, back exercises, and low-dose narcotics. A majority of patients will improve on this regimen. However, when conservative therapy fails, epidural steroid injections (ESIs) are an effective next step.

ESIs work by several mechanisms. They break the cycle of pain, followed by muscle spasms, followed by more pain which occurs in this condition. Pain relief afforded by epidural steroids may allow a larger and more pain free range of motion. This increases the effectiveness of physical therapy in preserving muscle strength and range of motion.

By administering a low-dose, long-acting medication, epidural steroids can effectively deliver the anti-inflammatory effect directly to the site of injury. This reduces the dose of medication necessary as well as increases its effectiveness.

Epidural steroids are simple and safe. The primary risk of the injection is a headache, which occurs in about 1 in 100 patients. Epidural steroids are safely performed by a pain specialist, usually an anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist.

## Before Your Procedure

- Do not take any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as high-dose aspirin (baby or low-dose is okay), Motrin, ibuprofen, and Celebrex for 3 days before receiving the injection.
- Do not take any blood thinning medication prior to an epidural steroid injection.
- If you are taking high-dose aspirin, coumadin, plavix, or any other medication for thinning your blood, you must inform the nurse who schedules your procedure who will notify the nurse anesthetist immediately.
- You may be asked to stop medication for 7 days prior to the procedure.

## For Your Information

You should not have an epidural steroid injection if you have any type of local or systemic bacterial infection, are pregnant, or have any history of bleeding problems.

Side effects and risks of steroid injections may include:

- occasional fluid gain
- night-time irritability
- hot flashes
- increased appetite

The steroid medication may not start working for 24 to 72 hours. Sometimes it can take up to one week for it to take effect. You may experience a sore injection site for a day or two after the procedure as a direct result of the needle being inserted into the epidural space and/or from the medication injected.

The ESI pain relief can last anywhere from days to months. If excellent pain relief is obtained from the first injection, there will be no need to repeat it. If the first epidural steroid injection does not relieve your pain and symptoms completely within 2 weeks, you may be rescheduled for a second injection. Three to four injections may be given in a 12-month period.

There is no guarantee that this injection or any other type of treatment will relieve 100% of your pain.

If you have questions about ESIs, contact your primary care provider.