

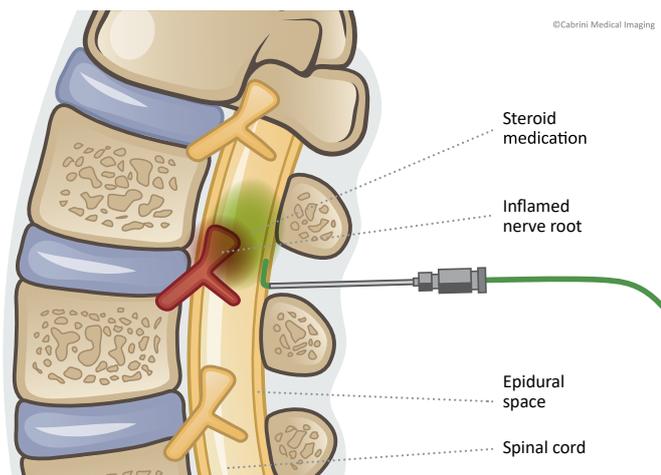
# Epidural injection

## What is an epidural injection?

An epidural injection is an injection of a steroid medication, usually with a long acting anaesthetic into the epidural space in your back, using a needle under CT or x-ray guidance. The intention is to give you temporary relief from your pain and to diagnose the cause of your pain.

Pain relief from this injection varies in its effectiveness, and in some cases people do not get any relief from their symptoms. It should be noted that steroid medication can take a few days to work and in some cases a week may pass before you start to notice symptomatic relief.

It is important you read the following information so that you will be able to consent to this procedure. If you have any further questions you will be given an opportunity to ask nursing or medical staff on the day.



## Before you come in for the procedure

You will be contacted by the Cabrini Medical Imaging with a date and time for your procedure and you will be asked to go to the admissions department one hour prior to your appointment time, as you will be admitted to the hospital as a 'day case'. This does not mean you will be in the hospital for the whole day.

You will be given instructions by Cabrini Medical Imaging. Please take note of the following and contact the department on the number below if you have any concerns.

- Please tell the staff if you are or think you may be pregnant

- If you are on any blood thinning medication, please make sure you let staff know as soon as possible, as this could affect the ability to do your procedure. Please check with your GP if unsure of your medication.
- On the day of your procedure please bring a list of your current medications (this includes over-the-counter medications, and herbal remedies)
- On the day of your procedure it is important that you bring any relevant x-rays
- Please make sure you have someone to drive you home, as you are not permitted to drive until the following day

## How your epidural injection will proceed

From the admissions department, you will be taken to the medical imaging department, where you will be prepared for your procedure and taken to the appropriate room.

At this point you have an opportunity to ask one of the nursing staff further questions or to speak to the doctor performing the injection. You will then be positioned on the table where the procedure is to be done.

Once you are lying on table (usually on your stomach) it is very important that you remain still for the rest of the injection.

After washing your skin with antiseptic, a small amount of local anaesthetic will be injected under the skin in the relevant area. This usually stings for a moment. The doctor will then place the needle into position. Sometimes a small amount of iodinated contrast will be injected, and repeat scan performed to confirm the correct position of the needle, in the epidural space. Sometimes slight adjustments need to be made. You may experience some discomfort at this stage, usually through the area you normally get your back pain.

Once the needle is in the correct position the steroid and sometimes long acting local anaesthetic will be injected by the doctor. At this point the procedure is finished, but it is important to remain on the table until instructed otherwise.

You will be then taken to a recovery area, where you will be observed for approximately two hours, before going home.

**As with all medical procedures there are associated risks and complications with having this procedure done, they can be broken down into common, rare and very rare.**

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### Common risks and complications

- Discomfort to the area, following the injection. This may be due to the tissues being aggravated by the procedure.
- Increase in your normal pain, due to additional pressure of the medication on the nerves, which has been injected. This is usually short lived.
- Numbness or loss of sensation through the affected area, due to the long acting anaesthetic injected during procedure. This wears off after a few hours, but be aware this can increase your risk of an accident if you are not careful.
- Bleeding or bruising to the localised area

### Rare risks and complications

- Infection, which could require additional treatment, possibly antibiotics
- Feeling of malaise/lethargy post procedure
- The procedure may have to be abandoned due to technical or medical reasons Infection, which could require additional treatment, possibly antibiotics
- Adverse effects from the steroid component of the injection, including insomnia and facial flushing
- The procedure may have to be abandoned due to technical or medical reasons
- Allergy to medications used during this procedure
- You may not get any relief from this procedure, requiring further treatment
- Headache post procedure requiring medical intervention

### Very rare risks and complications

- Damage to the spinal cord requiring surgery and other treatment
- Permanent nerve damage, leading to paralysis

### How do I get my results?

Digital images are immediately available to your doctor and your records will be kept permanently. This occurs through a system called PACS. **If a priority report is requested it will be issued within two hours and faxed or emailed to your doctor, however this can sometimes take up to 24 hours.**

If your referring doctor wants to see you on the day of your examination, please advise the reception staff when you arrive for your appointment, so the appropriate information can be made available for you to take to your doctor.

### Important

**It is important to let us know when you make your booking if you are or think you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.**

It is important to bring with you your referral, previous x-rays and any other tests (only if previous ones were **not** done at Cabrini or I-MED).

### Questions

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the relevant number below.