



Shailesh M. Patel, MD | Christopher A. Merrell, MD

MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK

Pre-Procedure Instructions:

Please pay close attention to the following information/instructions:

If you are currently on antibiotics or being treated for an infection, please call the office prior to your injection appointment.

1. You have been scheduled for a medial branch block. This procedure is a diagnostic injection to test whether or not the facet joints along the spine are a source of your pain.
2. You will be receiving an injection of local anesthetic. The length of pain relief is anticipated to be 6-8 hours only. This procedure is not expected to result in long-term pain relief.
3. You will not be given sedation for this procedure, as you need to be awake and alert immediately following to complete a pain diary form accurately. This form will be given to you and explained on the day of your procedure.
4. We do not anticipate that you will experience any weakness or numbness in the extremities. Nevertheless, it is suggested that you bring a driver to your appointment if possible.
5. If you take routine medications, you may take these on the day of your injection as scheduled.
6. If you are on any blood thinning medication (Plavix®, Coumadin®, Aggrenox®, Lovenox®, Xarelto®, aspirin), please notify the scheduler so that we may give you specific instructions about the length of time you need to discontinue these medications. In general, we follow the guidelines below for CERVICAL procedures (no need to stop for LUMBAR procedures):
 - Plavix® – Stop for 7 days prior to appointment (you will need clearance from your cardiologist)
 - Coumadin® – Stop 5 days prior to appointment
 - Lovenox® – Stop 24 hours prior to appointment.
 - Xarelto® – Stop 3 days prior to appointment.
 - Aggrenox® – Stop 7 days prior to appointment.
 - Aspirin – Stop 7 days prior.
 - Anti-inflammatory (Motrin®, ibuprofen, Advil®, Aleve®, etc.) – Stop 5 days prior.



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Post-Procedure Instructions:

Please pay close attention to the following information/instructions:

7. You have undergone a medial branch block procedure. This procedure is a diagnostic injection to test whether or not the facet joints along the spine are a source of your pain.
8. For the next 6-8 hours, your facet joints that were injected should be numb. During this time, please perform a few activities that normally cause your typical pain symptoms.
9. Please complete the 24-hour pain diary that you were given so that we can determine whether or not you had relief of your typical pain during the 6-8 hours following the procedure.
10. Your medial branch block may need to be repeated twice to confirm results. We will discuss this option with you in detail based on your specific situation.
11. In general, if your typical pain is reduced by >50%, then you are a candidate for a radiofrequency ablation. Radiofrequency ablation is a procedure that heats the medial branch nerves that supply the facet joints. By heating the individual nerves to each joint, you have the potential to experience long-term (6 months–2 years) pain relief in these joints.
12. Please remember that your medial branch block is only a diagnostic test block, and your regular pain usually returns within 24 hours.
13. Although complications from this procedure are extremely rare, if you are having excessive pain, redness at the needle sites, or any other signs of infections, please contact our office.