



Concord Orthopaedics, P.A.

PART V: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SPINAL INJECTION

Does the injection hurt?

The local injection at the beginning invariably does. There is no sugar-coating for this. Often times there is little discomfort afterwards. If discomfort does occur, we go to great lengths to minimize this.

Isn't spinal injection merely a band aid?

Persistent pain is caused by structural injury, but maintained by a change the function of your neurologic pain system. Epidural injection directly addresses this change, whereas surgery addresses only the structural change. As we understand more about how our pain system changes in chronic pain, it becomes less apparent why surgery works at all. The reality is some people respond to one approach, others, another.

What is the difference between a "nerve block" and an epidural?

A nerve block and a low volume transforaminal epidural are the same thing. A nerve block is used for diagnostic purposes while a transforaminal epidural is used for therapeutic purposes.

Isn't cortisone dangerous?

Please see the handout, Part III: What is Cortisone?+for more on this issue. In limited doses, cortisone is safe and can be quite efficacious

Can't I only have three injections in a lifetime?

No. We limit injection to a specific body part to 3-5 times in a year. As with any intervention, the less that is effective, the better.

Is the radiation exposure dangerous?

We go to great lengths to minimize exposure. The net exposure is little more than a simple x-ray.

Can my family member watch?

No. For medical-legal reasons, we must limit who is in the procedural room.

How long does it take?

The procedure usually takes 5-10 minutes.

How many injections will I get?

This is variable from patient to patient. A series may involve anywhere from 1 . 5 injections depending on how you respond.

Will I grow big muscles and hit more home-runs?

Not from cortisone. Androgens such as testosterone are abused by athletes to achieve such effects.

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Will I get a “buffalo” hump, a moon face, hair on my face, and weakening of my bones from the injection?

Not from limited exposure to cortisone. These are effects caused by long term exposure, usually to oral cortisone, and are referred to as Cushing's Syndrome.