



excellence in brain, spine and pain care
neurosciencegroup

Your Guide to Stellate Ganglion Blocks

What is a Stellate Ganglion Block?

A Stellate Ganglion Block is a procedure in which a small needle is placed near a group of sympathetic nerves in the neck area. The area is injected with local anesthetic to help relieve pain in the head, neck, upper arms, and chest.

How can a Stellate Ganglion Block help me?

A Stellate Ganglion Block can be an effective nonsurgical treatment that blocks neural connections to help ease your pain. This type of injection most often helps manage pain caused from reflex sympathetic dystrophy, complex regional pain syndrome, severe peripheral vascular disease, and neuropathic pain.

Will I have immediate relief after my Stellate Ganglion Block?

Stellate Ganglion Blocks typically do not have an immediate effect. Full effect of a Stellate Ganglion Block usually occurs within 7-10 days after the injection. You may still feel pain relief immediately afterwards from an anesthetic that was used, however, it typically wears off in 4-8 hours.

How do I prepare for my Stellate Ganglion Block?

Ensure your doctor knows if:

You are taking Coumadin or any other blood thinners: *Plavix, Aspirin, Eliquis, Excedrin, fish oil, etc.*

You are taking steroids and or antibiotics.

You have liver or kidney disease: *chronic kidney disease, cirrhosis, etc.*

You have the following implantable devices: *medication pump, pacemaker, defibrillator, or stimulator.*

You have any allergies: *steroids, anesthetic, iodine, adhesive, contrast, shellfish.*

You have any questions regarding your medication.

You have had or are planning to have a vaccine within 2 weeks of your procedure.

****Please call to cancel your appointment if you have a fever, the flu, covid, or any other infection****

What can I do the day of my Stellate Ganglion Block?

- You may eat and drink normally; there is no need to fast.
- Take your normal medication on the day of your test, unless otherwise instructed.
- You will need to shower with antibacterial soap the day before and the day of your procedure.
- Do NOT apply lotions, creams, ointments, or gels the day of your procedure.
- Wear loose fitting clothing.
- We suggest you do not plan any strenuous activity the day of your procedure.
- **Bring someone with you who can remain on campus to drive you home.**
(The length of the procedure itself is approximately 20 minutes).

What can I expect during the procedure?

You will need to be able to get yourself up onto the procedure table and position yourself on your back.

You will remain on your back for the entire length of the procedure.

Your neck will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution.

Your skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic.

Then the physician will use fluoroscopy (x-ray) to guide the placement of the needle into the stellate ganglion area.

You may feel some pressure in the area of your injection.

The physician will inject the medication slowly in order to decrease your discomfort.

Once the medication is injected, the needle is removed, the area will be cleaned off, a band aid will be applied, and the procedure is complete.

What happens after my Stellate Ganglion Block?

- You will spend about 10 minutes in the recovery room reviewing post-procedure instructions with the nurse prior to discharging. You may require a longer stay in recovery if additional monitoring is necessary.
- You will receive a pain diary after your procedure. **This will need to be filled out by you and you will need to call Neuroscience Group two weeks after your procedure to update us on the pain numbers you logged. Please do not lose or misplace your diary.**
- You may experience any of the following immediately after the procedure and up to eight hours later: droopy eyelid, red or “bloodshot” eye, tearing, nasal stuffiness, hoarse voice, sensation of a “lump” in your throat, difficulty swallowing, sensation of warmth or tingling in your hand. These symptoms will disappear as the local anesthetic wears off.
- **You may eat and drink AFTER YOUR VOICE RETURNS TO NORMAL. Begin with sips of water and progress to solid food as tolerated.**
- You can shower after your procedure. However, NO SOAKING in tub, hot tub, pool, etc. for 24 hours.
- You will need to refrain from strenuous activity and heavy lifting for the remainder of the day. You may return to work the following day.

**Questions about your Stellate Ganglion Block procedure?
Call Heather, our Physiatry Nurse Navigator, 920-725-9373**