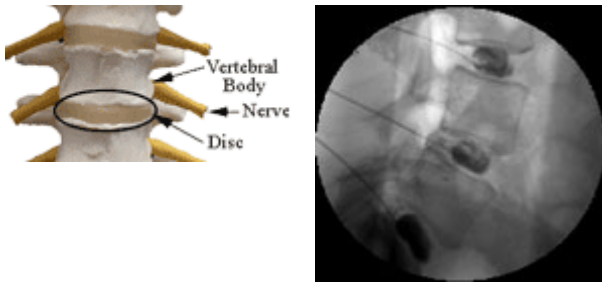


Discogram

WHAT IS IT?

A discogram is a diagnostic test performed to view and assess the internal structure of a disc and determine if it is a source of pain.



HOW IS IT DONE?

The patient is given intravenous medication as a relaxant and pain reliever. A local anesthetic is injected into the patient's skin in the area that is being examined.

A needle is inserted through a previously placed needle in the skin and into the disc under fluoroscopy. A saline solution and radiopaque dye are injected into the disc or discs if more than one disc is being examined. A CT scan is usually performed on the painful disc after the dye is injected to obtain images of the dye distribution. This will demonstrate annular tears, scarring, disc bulges and changes in the nucleus of the disc.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Recreation of painful symptoms if the disc/discs is abnormal.
- Confirmation of a diagnosis and/or determination of which disc/discs is the source of pain.

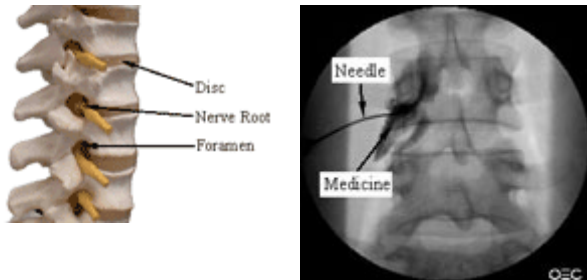
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Thirty minutes plus an additional thirty minutes if a CT is indicated plus recovery time of several hours.

Selective Nerve Root Block

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed to determine if a specific spinal nerve root is the source of pain and reduce inflammation around the nerve root thus decreasing or relieving the pain.



HOW IS IT DONE?

The patient is given a local anesthetic. The physician then locates, under fluoroscopy, a specific spinal nerve root. A needle is introduced through the skin into the area adjacent to the nerve root. Medication is then injected into the area bathing the nerve root. The medications include an anesthetic and steroid.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Relief of back and leg pain.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Thirty minutes to one hour.

Glossary

INFLAMMATION -
Tissue reaction to
irritation.

Epidural Block

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed under fluoroscopy to confirm a specific diagnosis and/or decrease pain and inflammation.

HOW IS IT DONE?

A local skin anesthetic is given. A spinal needle is then inserted into the epidural space of the lumbar or caudal spine. An anesthetic and steroid are injected into the epidural space.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Relief of pain if the medication reaches the inflamed area or source of pain.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Thirty minutes plus approximately forty-five minutes recovery time.

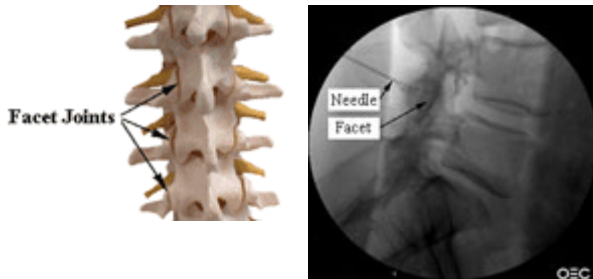
Glossary

EPIDURAL - Space outside the dura or covering of the spinalcord. This space runs the length of the spine.

Facet Block

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed to confirm that a facet joint is the source of pain and decrease pain and inflammation in a facet joint or joints.



HOW IS IT DONE?

The patient is given a local skin anesthetic - a needle is then inserted into the facet joint or facet capsule and an anesthetic and steroid are injected by the physician. This is done under fluoroscopy.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Decrease in or relief of back pain.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Thirty minutes.

Blocks are done in conjunction with physical therapy.

Sympathetic Injection

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed to determine if there is damage to the sympathetic nerve chain and if it is the source of pain. This is a diagnostic test primarily, but it may provide relief far in excess of the duration of the anesthetic.

HOW IS IT DONE?

A local skin anesthetic is given in the lumbar area of the back. A needle is then inserted into the back under fluoroscopy next to the vertebral body. The block may be performed on both sides of the spine. An anesthetic medication will be injected into the area.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The patient may note redness of the lower extremity and a feeling of warmth.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

It takes thirty minutes for the procedure followed by evaluation and recovery for several hours.

Costovertebral Block

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed under fluoroscopy to identify the costovertebral joint as the pain generator and decrease or relieve pain in that area and out toward the lateral rib cage.

HOW IS IT DONE?

The patient is placed in a prone position and given a local skin anesthetic. Under fluoroscopy the specific costovertebral joint(s) is identified. A needle is placed in that area(s) and an anesthetic and steroid are injected.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Initially, when a needle is inserted in the costovertebral area(s), there will be a reproduction of pain. Following injection of the medications, there may be relief of pain and increased mobility. Duration of relief varies with the individual.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Fifteen to thirty minutes.

Stellate Ganglion Block

WHAT IS IT?

A block that is performed under fluoroscopy to determine if there is damage to the sympathetic nerve chain and if it is the source of the patient's arm pain. This is primarily a diagnostic block but it may provide pain relief in excess of the duration of the anesthetic.

HOW IS IT DONE?

A local skin anesthetic is given near the base of the neck on the affected side. A needle is inserted by the anesthesiologist near the transverse process of the cervical spine (usually at the cervical-6 level). A sterile tubing is attached to the needle and anesthetic medication is slowly injected through the tubing.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The patient may note increased warmth and redness of the painful arm during and after the injection. The patient can expect hoarseness of their voice, redness of the eye, drooping of the eyelid and pupillary constriction for four to eight hours after the injection. Pain relief may be noted immediately. Duration of relief is variable. The patient must assess their pain relief over the first three to four hours after the injection and report this to the anesthesiologist.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

It takes less than thirty minutes for the procedure followed by evaluation and recovery for several hours.

Neurotomy

WHAT IS IT?

Facet neurotomy is a procedure which results in interruption of the nerve supply to a facet joint. This interruption known as denervation, is accomplished by a radio-frequency probe that heats the 2 small nerve branches to each facet joint. These nerves are called the medial branches.

HOW IS IT DONE?

With the patient in a prone position and under local anesthesia and fluoroscopic guidance, a radio-frequency needle is advanced to the base of the transverse processes. The needle is placed along the course of the medial branch. The needle is heated to 80° C for 90 seconds. At least 2 branches for each joint are treated in this same manner. The patient is given a local anesthetic. The physician then locates, under fluoroscopy, a specific spinal nerve root. A needle is introduced through the skin into the area adjacent to the nerve root. Medication is then injected into the area bathing the nerve root. The medications include an anesthetic and steroid.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Following the neurotomy, there is a 60% chance of pain relief. This typically last for 3 months to 1 1/2 years. The nerve eventually grows back and the procedure can be repeated. While the patient is experiencing pain relief, vigorous physical therapy is necessary to try and strengthen the involved facet joint(s).

POTENTIAL RISK:

Increased localized back pain and/or leg pain can be expected from several days to several weeks and rarely several months. Destabilization of the facet joint is a risk and post injection training to strengthen the extensor muscles can prevent this possibility.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The neurotomy takes 10 to 45 minutes, depending on the number of levels to be done. The patient is then recovered in the observation area for 30 minutes to 1 hour.