



## Selective Nerve Root Block (SNRB) Injection Patient Education

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### WHAT IS A SELECTIVE NERVE ROOT BLOCK INJECTION?

A Selective Nerve Root Block (SNRB) is a targeted injection of local anesthetic and steroid into the area around a single spinal nerve. This injection is placed outside of the spinal canal and epidural space, but is otherwise similar to a transforaminal epidural steroid injection. This procedure is performed with diagnostic and therapeutic intent, meaning that it helps to diagnose whether the targeted nerve is the source of your pain, as well as to provide pain relief. At times, only local anesthetic (no steroid) is used in order to obtain diagnostic information.

### HOW IS THE PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

The patient lies on his/her stomach or back, depending on which nerve is being targeted. The skin of the back or neck is cleansed with antiseptic solution and a sterile field is created. Local anesthetic is used to numb the skin and deeper tissues. Under X-ray guidance (fluoroscopy), a needle is advanced to a point just outside of the spinal canal where the spinal nerve is known to course. A small amount of contrast dye is injected to ensure accurate needle placement, then a combination of local anesthetic and steroid or anesthetic alone is injected around the target spinal nerve. The injection takes about 5-10 minutes to complete.

### HOW LONG DOES THE EFFECT LAST?

The effect might last a few hours to a few weeks or much longer. Pain relief in the first couple of hours after the injection may be the most important as this tells us if our diagnosis is likely correct. Once the effect of the local anesthetic wears off in a few hours, the steroid will take effect in 3-10 days. If the symptoms do return, we will discuss options available for continued pain relief, which may include repeating the injection for additive benefit.

### WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP AFTER THE INJECTION?

You will be given a pain log to complete after the procedure and instructions on how to return this information to Dr. Michalik's office. This will help us to measure your response to the injection and determine the next most appropriate step in your care.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS?

Serious side effects and complications are rare. The most common problem after the injection is having slightly increased pain in the area of the injection for up to a few days. The other potential complications are infection, bleeding and nerve injury. These complications are minimized by stopping blood thinners, using sterile technique, and fluoroscopy for x-ray needle guidance. Some individuals may temporarily develop headaches, facial flushing, higher than normal blood pressure, and high blood sugar from the steroid, all of which typically resolve within a few days.