



Shoulder Joint Nerve Block Patient Education

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WHAT ARE A SHOULDER JOINT NERVE BLOCKS?

Shoulder joints are formed by the connection between the humerus and the scapula. Pain from these joints can be caused by injury or inflammation. If these joints, or nerves carrying pain signals from the joint, are blocked or anesthetized (i.e. numbed), they will not be able to transfer the painful sensation to the brain. Shoulder Joint Nerve blocks are performed for diagnostic purposes to see if the shoulder joint is the source of your pain and whether specific nerves are carrying the pain signals. This procedure is also performed to see if you are a candidate for a treatment called radiofrequency ablation.

HOW IS THE PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

The patient lies on his/her back or stomach, depending on which nerves are being targeted. The skin of the shoulder is cleansed with antiseptic solution and a sterile field is created. A small amount of anesthetic is used to numb the skin. Under X-ray (fluoroscopy) guidance, a small needle is advanced into the targeted nerve around the shoulder joint. A small amount of contrast dye may be injected to ensure accurate needle placement, then local anesthetic is injected. The injection takes about 5-10 minutes to complete.

HOW LONG DOES THE EFFECT LAST?

Pain relief from the local anesthetic typically only lasts a few hours. It is important to monitor how much pain relief you experience.

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 using sterile technique and imaging guidance.