

River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



YOUR PAIN MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

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1. What is the purpose of my procedure?

There are two basic types of pain management procedures. These types include “diagnostic” procedures, and “therapeutic” procedures.

2. What is a "diagnostic procedure"?

A diagnostic procedure is specifically designed to help your doctor determine the source of your pain. Typically, the doctor will inject medication called a local anesthetic into a target area to make that area numb. If that area is causing all or part of your pain problem, then you will feel some relief of your pain. Commonly, a diagnostic procedure is repeated on another day to make sure the area injected was indeed the source of your pain. Facet joint injections or “medial branch blocks” and “nerve root blocks” are examples of diagnostic injections.

3. How long will the relief last from a "diagnostic procedure"?

A diagnostic procedure is not specifically intended to make the pain go away permanently. The amount of time the pain is relieved is related to the type of medication your doctor will inject. Typically, the relief lasts 4 to 12 hours. Some injections may last longer or shorter depending upon your specific circumstances. It is possible that the diagnostic procedure will not relieve your pain at all if the area injected is not causing your pain.

4. What is a “therapeutic” procedure?

A therapeutic procedure is specifically designed to treat the source of your pain. Once your doctor has reasonably determined the source of your pain, the area of your pain may be injected with medications to relieve the pain for a period of time. Typically, a “therapeutic” procedure involves the injection of local anesthetics and a steroid solution. Epidural steroid injections, facet joint injections with steroid, and trigger point injections are examples of therapeutic injections.

5. How long will the relief last from a "therapeutic procedure"?

Most patients receive 2 or more weeks of relief if the appropriate area causing the pain has been injected. Some patients will receive several weeks or months of relief, especially during a persistent exacerbation of the pain. Many patients undergo periodic therapeutic injections whenever other treatments are not effective or are not well tolerated, and during flare-ups of their pain.

6. How many injections will I get?

You have stopped once, you can stop again! Stress is an important “trigger” for regular smokers and places former smokers at a high risk for relapse. Coping styles vary with individuals and it is important to develop a healthy way of handling stress. In particular, once you have stopped smoking you will be prepared to handle the “next wave” of stress that occurs in your life without returning to smoking.

7. How many injections will be performed at one time?

This depends on the source of your pain. For example, if you have more than one joint or nerve inflamed, you may have more than one area injected. Your doctor will discuss with you the areas to be injected and if they will be injected on the same day or separately.

8. My injection really worked well for six weeks, how many more can I have?

The number of allowable injections depends upon a variety of factors. One of the most important factors relates to the amount of steroids you receive during each of your injections. Your doctor will calculate the amount of steroids you have received and determine what a safe amount is for you. Typically, pain physicians perform 3 to 4 injections over a six month period at typical doses of steroids.

9. Are the injections painful?

Most pain management procedures are minimally painful. Your doctor will administer local anesthetic under the skin prior to performing the procedure. If you need additional local anesthetic, your doctor will give that to you during the procedure. Occasionally, the areas causing the pain are sensitive and your normal pain may be temporarily aggravated. This typically subsides after the medication “kicks in” and the area injected becomes less inflamed.

10. I have both neck and low back pain, can I have both areas injected at the same time?

Usually it is a good idea to only have one body area injected on a single day. Your doctor will discuss with you the appropriate areas to inject at a given time.