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Cervical Sympathetic Block

1. What is the Cervical Sympathetic Block Information and why is it performed?

A cervical sympathetic block (sometimes called a Stellate Ganglion Block) is used to help diagnose and treat different types of neuropathic (nerve injury or irritation) pain in your arms, wrists, or hands. This pain is usually burning and you may have sensitivity to any type of light touch. The cervical sympathetic ganglia are small bundles of nerves in your neck. The nerves in the cervical sympathetic ganglia are called sympathetic nerves and problems with these nerves will often cause the burning pain and sensitivity in your arms or hands. A cervical sympathetic block temporarily turns these nerves off. You may receive a repeat cervical sympathetic block if the first was helpful.

2. What will happen to me during the procedure?

When you enter the center, you will be taken into an admission room where a nurse will check your vitals. Please wear loose-fitting clothing and note that you will be asked to change into a hospital gown. After your vitals are taken, an IV could be placed if you are receiving sedation during the procedure. Once you have been escorted to the procedure room, our nursing staff will then position you on a narrow table. The site of the procedure will be cleaned with iodine and sterilely draped. Once sterilized, the physician will numb your skin with a small needle – the numbing process may sting, but we will try to minimize your discomfort.

Next, a very small needle is inserted into your neck on the affected side. More than one needle may be used. The needle will be inserted under x-ray as this helps guide the needle to the correct position. When the needle is in the right position, local anesthetic will be injected into the cervical sympathetic ganglia to “turn off” the nerves. After your procedure, the nurses in the recovery room will watch you closely.

3. What should I do and expect after the procedure?

After the cervical sympathetic block is performed you will notice certain symptoms that may be present for up to 8-12 hours. You may notice increased warmth and redness of the arm and hand. Rarely, you may have some numbness or weakness of the arm or hand. Again, these symptoms are only temporary and will go away in time. Since these symptoms are present and since you have likely had sedation, you will need a ride home. You will need to avoid the following activities until these sensations have passed: climbing, driving and any exertion.

Most importantly, we want to know if your pain is improved and to what extent. It is not uncommon to have complete pain relief, only partial relief or no relief at all. You will be asked to keep a pain diary to help you keep track of the level of pain you experience after your procedure. We will discuss this at your next visit.

4. For what reasons should I call Park Plaza Surgical Specialists after the procedure?

You should call us immediately at 318-703-2643 if you experience any of the following:

- Severe neck pain that is not relieved with medication and ice
- Prolonged, new numbness or weakness of your arms
- Signs of infection in the area of injection

NOTE: If you experience loss of bladder and/or bowels control OR difficulty breathing, please go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

Park Plaza Surgical Specialists is committed to quality healthcare.

If you have questions about this procedure, please see a member of our clinical team.

If you are interested in learning more about our practice or treatment solutions,
please visit www.RiverCities.net/ppss