

# Lumbar Sympathetic Block

## What is a lumbar sympathetic block and why is it performed?

- A lumbar sympathetic block is an injection of local anesthetic to the sympathetic nerves along the lumbar spine.
- This procedure can be used to diagnose and treat pain facilitated by the sympathetic nervous system.
- The sympathetic nervous system controls involuntary processes such as blood flow and sweating and can be involved in maintaining pain sensations.
- A lumbar sympathetic block can be used to manage pain in the legs resulting from complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS).
- The goal of the procedure is to temporarily relieve pain so patients can participate in restorative therapies (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, exercise) and achieve functional improvement.

## What to do before the procedure

- Review the handout called 'Pre-Procedure Instructions for Fluoroscopy'
- Arrange for someone to bring you to the hospital and take you home

## What to expect during the procedure

- You will need to lie flat on your stomach for this procedure. Your lower back will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and your upper back and legs will be covered with sterile towels. Only your lower back will be exposed. You will need to remain still and refrain from moving until the injection is complete.
- The doctor will administer a local anesthetic to numb the skin of your lower back. Then the doctor will use an x-ray to guide a needle to the lumbar sympathetic nerves. A local anesthetic medication is then injected.
- This procedure will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

## What to expect after the procedure

- Review the handout called 'Post-Procedure Instructions for Fluoroscopy'
- Your lower leg may feel warm and/or weak immediately following the procedure
- You may experience redness, soreness, warmth, and/or numbness at the site of injection for the first 1-2 days
- You may feel dizzy and/or light-headed following the procedure, the nurse will check your blood pressure prior to your discharge

## Side effects and risks

- There is a rare, yet serious, risk of the following complications: infection, bleeding, puncture of the vascular and nerve structures, or paralysis. If you have questions following the procedure please contact the pain clinic at **519-646-6100 ext. 61786**
- **If you experience, fever, new or severe numbness or weakness, loss of bowel and bladder function, or severe back pain seek immediate medical attention by going to the emergency room.**

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