Caudal Epidural Steroid Injection

This procedure is done to help relieve chronic low back pain, as well as leg pain or numbness. The pain is often from inflammation of the spinal nerve where it exits from the spinal column. The medicine helps ease the inflammation. Most people will have a series of injections done over time.

Be sure to talk to your doctor before this injection if you:

- Have any allergies
- Take a blood thinning medicine such as Coumadin
- Show any signs of an active infection, such as fever or chills
- Are pregnant or think you might be

What to expect

You will be placed on a table on your stomach. An area near your tailbone is cleaned with a soap solution. The skin is numbed. Then the doctor puts a small needle into your tailbone. The needle position is checked by x-ray. A small plastic tube called a catheter is put through the needle to the area. Medicine is injected through the catheter. The needle and catheter are removed.

Possible side effects

For 12 to 24 hours after the injection, you may have pain or bruising at the site of needle insertion. If this occurs, apply an ice pack for 15 minutes every hour to help relieve the pain. Over the counter pain medicine such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen may also be helpful.

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You may have an increase in your usual pain called a flare-up that should ease in 3 to 4 days. Most relief in noticed after the 2nd and 3rd injections in the series.

You may have **side effects from the steroid medicine**. These may include:

- Weight gain
- Increase in blood sugar, especially if you have diabetes
- Water retention
- Increase risk of infection

**When to call**

Call the Spine Center at (614) 293-2225 if you have:

- Any signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, fever, or chills
- Low back feels tender to touch especially near the tailbone or it becomes more severe
- Changes in muscle function, such as weakness of a leg
- A severe sustained headache, unlike a common headache

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.