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## **HUNTINGTON CENTER FOR PAIN TREATMENT – PATIENT INFORMATION ON EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTIONS**

Who Benefits from Epidural Steroid injections? Your doctor may prescribe an epidural steroid injection for a problem such as sciatica (shooting down the back of the leg), Herniated (slipped) discs, Arthritis, Spinal Stenosis, Acute Shingles, Vertebral Fracture, and others. These are some of the more common disorders which can cause nerve root irritation and are associated with inflammation which may respond to epidural steroid injections.

What is an Epidural Steroid Injection? Epidural refers to the tiny space located around your spinal cord. Using a special technique, we can locate the space and inject a number of different medications. In many instances, the pain is associated with inflammation. It is expected that steroidal solution, when injected into the epidural space, may relieve some of the redness or hotness (inflammation) associated with pain.

Are Epidural Steroid Injections Safe? Relatively small amounts of steroid are used and there are usually few long-term effects. Specific questions regarding the use of steroids should be discussed with your doctor.

What is the Chance of an Epidural Steroid Injection Helping Me? If the pain is caused by nerve irritation (inflammation) from a herniated disc, it is likely that an epidural steroid injection can help you. Over 50% of patients with these problems are helped. Suppression of inflammation usually takes 2-3 days. Ask your doctor for more details.

How Many Injections Will I Need? The standard Protocol followed in our office includes a series of three (3) injections (one every 7-21 days), followed by a thorough neurologic evaluation to assess the degree of improvement from our therapy. If you do not respond to the first or second injection or if your pain comes back, you can discuss other treatment options with you referring doctor or with your Pain Management specialist.

Are There Any Risks To Epidural Steroid Injections? Epidural steroid injections are a safe and reliable technique to administer medications around the nerve roots near the spine. Epidurals are used quite commonly for pain associated with labor or delivery of a baby as well as to provide anesthesia for a variety of operations. Risks involved are very small and should be discussed with your doctor. These risks include a small risk of bleeding or infection, the possibility of a post-dural headache, and possible recurrence of the pain. You may be sore for a few days from the injection itself.

# Huntington Center for Pain Treatment

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### **Patient Instructions – Pre-Epidural Steroid Injections**

\*\*\*\*\* Please follow these instructions for each epidural you have \*\*\*\*\*

#### **Fasting Instructions**

Patients having the injection should not eat for at least five (5) hours prior to the injection. Small amounts of fluids may be taken.

You may eat after the injection.

#### **Medication Instructions**

After consulting with your physician, blood thinning medications such as ASPIRIN and COUMADIN, or any medication containing aspirin must be discontinued at least five (5) days prior to the injection.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY medications and PLAVIX must be discontinued at least 48 hours prior to the injection. (ex. Celebrex, Advil, Alleve., Motrin, Ibuprofen, Arthrotec, Mobic to name a few)

Any other scheduled medication should be continued.

#### **Transportation**

You **MUST** have a driver with you to take you home.