

# Stellate Ganglion Injection

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A Stellate Ganglion Injection is done to provide pain relief by blocking sympathetic nerves to the arm and hand. This type of injection is used in the treatment of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) or Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD).

## About the injection

A local anesthetic is injected into the area beside the voice box at the front of your neck. The injection is given on the painful side. The injection blocks the sympathetic nerves which seem to be part of the pain problem in some cases of CRPS and RSD.

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## Before your appointment

- If you are taking blood thinning and/or anti-platelet medications, ask the doctor or nurse for instructions, **at least 2 weeks before the injection.**
- If you are unwell, have a fever, or are on antibiotics, please call us at the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic – 905-521-2100, extension 44621.
- Eat a light meal and drink before your appointment.
- If you are an insulin dependent diabetic, do not change your normal eating patterns and take your routine medications.
- Come to the Pain Clinic 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment.
- Bring a list of your current medications to every appointment.
- **Arrange to have a ride home.** You may be in the Pain Clinic for about 30 to 45 minutes.

## When you first arrive at your appointment

- You will be asked to complete a pain level questionnaire.
- Please talk with the nurse about any pain that you are having, medications you are taking and your activity level.
- Have your blood pressure taken.
- Sign your consent form.
- You will have an IV (intravenous) started.
- Walk with a nurse into the procedure room.

**It is very important that you are aware and understand fully the risks and benefits of the procedure before a decision is made. Please discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with your doctor.**

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## During the injection

A nurse will be with you at all times and explain to you what is going to happen. You will lie on a stretcher on your back. A blood pressure cuff is put on your arm. A probe is placed on your finger to check your heart rate.

The doctor will feel your neck beside your voice box to find the right spot for the injection. The doctor washes the area and then injects the local anesthetic.

## After the injection

After the injection you may notice:

- that your voice is hoarse
- a sore throat, or feel like there is a lump in your throat
- a blood shot eye or droopy eyelid on the side of the injection
- a stuffy nose on the side of the injection
- that your skin feels warmer on the side of the injection and is pink
- that you sweat less on the side of the injection
- decreased pain on the injection side. The local anesthetic will wear off after a few hours, but the nerve block may last for many more hours.

## Be careful!

- You must not drink or eat until your sore throat and hoarseness goes away. This may be several hours.
  - Please be careful when you drink for the first time after the injection. Take just a few sips of water. If you do this okay, then drink normally.
  - If your arm feels numb or heavy, you will need to protect it in a sling for 4 to 6 hours.
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**Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic  
McMaster University Medical Centre  
905-521-2100, extension 44621**