



Understanding Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)

These types of injections are used to help improve pain that radiates down your leg.

They will not help with back pain.

We use epidural steroid injections (ESIs) as a conservative treatment option for certain types of pain that are caused by irritation and inflammation of spinal nerve roots.

Between the vertebral bones are disks that provide cushioning for your vertebrae and flexibility. Sometimes, nerve roots that are attached to your spinal cord can become pinched or inflamed, for example, if you have a herniated disk. The inflamed nerves can cause pain radiating down your buttocks and/or legs.

There are 2 types of ESIs that we perform in our office. These include:

Transforaminal (across the foramen) ESI: For a transforaminal ESI, the path of the needle is through the foramina, which are openings through which nerve roots exit your spine.

Caudal (via the sacrum) ESI: For a caudal ESI, the path of the needle is through the sacral hiatus, which is toward the bottom of your sacrum and just above your tailbone, to reach the lowest spinal nerves. (Only performed by Dr. McQuain)

Before your injection:

If you are currently taking an anticoagulant, below is a list of medications and how many days you need to stop these medications before you can receive the injection. If these medications are not stopped, you will have to reschedule your injection.

You must get cardiac clearance from Cardiology if you are on any of these medications.

Aggrenox (Aspirin + Dipyridamole)	Stop 24 hours before injection
Plavix/Clopidogrel	Stop 7 days before injection
Prasugrel/Effient	Stop 7 days before injection
Ticagrelor/Brilinta	Stop 7 days before injection
Ticlid/Clopidine	Stop 14 days before injection
Lovenox	Stop 12 hours before injection
Fragmin	Stop 12 hours before injection
Innohep	Stop 12 hours before injection
Arixtra/Fondaparinux	Stop 3 days before injection
Eliquis/Apixabn	Stop 3 days before injection
Pradaxa/Dabigatran	Stop 7 days before injection
Xarelto/Rivaroxaban	Stop 2 days before injection
Coumadin/Warfarin	Stop 5 days before injection with an INR less than or equal to 1.5

You do NOT need to stop any anti-inflammatory medications such as Ibuprofen, Advil, Meloxicam, etc.

On the day of your injection:

Make sure that you are wearing comfortable clothing. The best thing to wear for this is your sweatpants and T-shirt. (Women, please do not wear a dress.) Please empty all pockets prior to coming in for your injection as you will be lying on your stomach.

You will need a driver for the day of your injection. You will not be able to drive for at a minimum of around 4-6 hours following your injection. If you do not have a driver for this date, you will have to reschedule to a date when you will have a driver available.

Please do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours before your injection. This is a precautionary measure. If you need to take any medication before the injection, you can do so with a small amount of water.

During your injection:

Once you have checked in, you will be brought back to an exam room where we will confirm your allergies and the location of your injection. Your provider will then come into the exam room to discuss the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have.

Your provider will then bring you into our procedure room. There will be your provider, a nurse, and an X-ray tech in the room with you. We will instruct you on where to go, how to lie, and what to do. We will then proceed with your injection.

We will use a local anesthetic to numb the skin before we start. We then inject a mixture of steroid (Dexamethasone) and numbing medication into the epidural space around your spinal nerves along your spine. The steroid coats the irritated nerve(s) that are causing your pain and works to reduce swelling and pressure on the nerves.

You will not be sedated during this injection.

After your injection:

After you receive your injection, you may have leg weakness for a few hours. This is normal and should not cause any alarm. You may have some soreness in the area where you received the injection, and it is okay to ice that area.

Do not do any heavy lifting or strenuous activity for the remainder of the day; take it easy. You can go back to your normal routine the following day.

Be aware that it can take 7-10 days (sometimes longer) for the steroid to take effect. You will feel some relief on the day of the injection, but that is from the numbing medication that is mixed with the steroid and will wear off in a couple of hours.

You will be scheduled for 1 or 2 follow-up appointments, and you must attend at least one of these to be eligible to have another injection order placed per insurance.