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PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCKS

Your doctor has recommended medial branch blocks or facet blocks. These can be used to help diagnose your condition. Medial branch blocks consist of a minimum of two needles and a maximum of six needles placed into the facet joints. The number of needles used is determined by your physician and after reviewing your diagnostic testing. If you have any questions about the procedure, please let us know.

YOUR PROCEDURE IS SCHEDULED AT:

- ELLIOT HOSPITAL RIVERS EDGE (please plan to arrive 45 minutes prior to your injection)**
- CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER (please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to your injection)**
- HOLY FAMILY HOSPITAL (please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to your injection)**
- NH NEUROSPINE INSTITUTE (please plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to your injection)**

Please advise our office if there is any chance that you are:

1. Pregnant or chance of being pregnant
2. Allergic to anesthetic, steroid, radiologic dye, seafood, latex or medicines
3. Have an active infection or are taking an antibiotic

Please follow these directions before having this injection:

We do need you to have a driver from the hospital for your ride home. This will be verified before your procedure is performed and it will be rescheduled if you are not accompanied by a driver.

Medications: Please notify us if you are taking the following medications

- **Coumadin , Warfarin or Lovenox (blood thinners)** - let us know 1 week prior to your injection as this will need to be stopped and blood work done prior to the procedure. Please check with your prescribing MD for authorization prior to stopping this medication.
- **Asprin or Plavix (clopidogrel)** - stop taking for 5 days prior to the procedure. Please check with your prescribing MD for authorization prior to stopping this medication.
- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications** (ibuprofen, motrin, advil, aleve, naproxen, celebrex, etc.)- stop taking this for 7 days prior to the procedure. If you are unsure if what you are taking is an NSAID, please ask us.

Take your usual medication on the day of the procedure, with the exceptions discussed above.

- **If you are diabetic**, please check your blood sugar before your appointment. The injection may cause your blood sugar to elevate. After the injection, check your blood sugar frequently for the next 2-3 days. Make adjustments as necessary. You may have to notify your doctor who treats your diabetes so the blood sugar can be treated appropriately.

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What to expect when you arrive:

You will be brought into the fluoroscopy suite and be prepared for the procedure.

- Your vital signs (blood pressure and pulse) will be evaluated for the procedure.
- During the procedure you will need to lie on your stomach. Your back will be cleansed and the area covered with a sterile drape.
- Medicine is then given to numb the skin near the injections sites.
- Fluoroscopy (x-ray imaging) is used to get an x-ray of your spine. Contrast “dye” may be injected to help confirm placement of the needles.
- The doctor then places the needles necessary for the procedure and the medication is injected.
- Band aids will be placed over the injection sites.
- You will be monitored after the procedure to assure that you are feeling well and then discharged home with your driver.

What to expect after the procedure:

- You may have some soreness at the injection sites, if so applying ice will help.
- You do not need to stay in bed when you get home. In fact, it is best to walk around.
- The day after your injection, you can remove the band aids and wash with soap and water. You may resume your pre-procedure activities.

The duration of pain relief depends on many factors and is difficult to predict. **It is not uncommon for patients to have an increase in pain for a period of time following the injection.**

When to call us:

- **Severe** pain
- Fever or chills
- Redness or swelling around the injection sites

Insurance authorizations:

As with any part of your overall health care, it is important to understand what your insurance benefits are. As the patient, it is your responsibility to understand the financial obligations based on your insurance coverage. The place where a service is rendered may have a significant impact on your coverage and out of pocket cost. You should consult with your insurance company to determine which option would be most beneficial to you. NH NeuroSpine Institute will be happy to provide you with the procedure codes of your proposed procedure which will enable you to obtain the most accurate insurance benefits. It is NHNSI’s responsibility to ensure that authorization has been obtained in the event that your insurance company requires it. If you have any questions regarding any of this please contact our pre-certification coordinator at 603-472-8888 ext 358.