

Intercostal Nerve Block

Patients with certain disease processes or thoracic surgery may suffer from rib pain afterwards.

Intercostal Nerve Blocks provide an injection of local anesthetic directly into the area of pain to deaden the nerve(s). A steroid medication may also be injected to reduce the inflammation. If the pain returns, the nerves may be locally destroyed by the injection of absolute alcohol or radiofrequency ablation.

How is This Procedure Performed?

The patient will be brought to the procedure room and be comfortably placed on the procedure table. The injection area will be sterilized and drapes will be put in place to keep the area clean. A local anesthetic, or numbing agent, will be administered to lessen discomfort from the actual injection. A needle will be inserted into the appropriate point of interest and guided to the precise nerve using fluoroscopy "real-time" imaging. A dye will be injected to confirm the accurate location and then the medication will be injected. Once the injection is complete, the skin will be cleaned once more and a band-aid applied.

What Should I Expect After the Injection?

Patients may be monitored for a short time to ensure that the procedure was received well. The patient may have slight discomfort from the fluid pressure, but should have maximum benefit from the medicine within approximately seven days. There may be immediate relief, or numbness, from the local anesthetic that will wear off shortly. A driver should accompany the patient to the facility to take them home safely.

Please consult your physician if you experience any side effect, such as painful headache; fever of over 101; loss of function or feeling in arms or legs; loss of bowel or bladder control; and severe pain not controlled by over-the-counter pain medications.