

Celiac Plexus Block

About the procedure

A celiac plexus block is done to reduce upper abdominal and back pain related to cancer or inflammatory conditions of the pancreas or other abdominal organs. Sometimes a celiac plexus block is used to aid in the diagnosis of abdominal pain when no cause has been identified. The procedure usually is done as an outpatient procedure by a physician trained in pain management.

Before the procedure

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure. You should not drive for 24 hours after the procedure.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours prior to your procedure. Talk to your physician about adjusting your insulin if you have diabetes.
- Take your usual medications, including pain medications, unless instructed otherwise by your physician.

During the procedure

- You will be asked to put on a hospital gown.
- You may have an intravenous (IV) catheter placed in your arm.
- The procedure will be done in a room equipped with an X-ray machine called a fluoroscope.
- You will lie on your abdomen on an X-ray table.
- Your back will be cleaned with an antiseptic.
- Usually a needle is placed on the left side of the mid-back to deliver medication to the celiac plexus.
- The procedure usually takes 30 to 60 minutes.

After the procedure

- You will return to the examination room and rest for up to one hour.

Side effects

Common side effects may include:

- Dizziness or light-headedness.
- Diarrhea.
- Pain at the injection sites.

Please call if you experience any of these side rare side effects:

- Infection.
- Bleeding.
- Permanent loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Permanent weakness and numbness of the lower extremities.
- Puncture of the lung resulting in shortness of breath.
- Damage to the kidneys, ureters, liver or spleen.
- Sexual dysfunction.

Discuss all possible side effects with your physician.

Care following the procedure

- Limit your activities, especially strenuous activities, for the remainder of the day. If you have any questions about activity, ask your physician or nurse.
- You should not drive for 24 hours after the procedure, if you have had sedation.
- Put an ice pack on the injection sites for 20 minutes, three or four times during the first 24 hours after your procedure.
- Bathe as usual. However, do not use a hot tub, whirlpool or sauna for 24 hours after your procedure.
- Move slowly when changing position from lying to sitting or standing.
- Eat and drink as usual. However, to avoid dehydration, drink more fluids such as water, juice and caffeine-free carbonated beverages and tea.
- Continue to take your usual medications unless instructed otherwise by your physician.
- Call your physician if any of the following occur:
 - You have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius or greater.
 - The injection sites become red, swollen, tender or warm.
 - Fluid drains from the injection sites.
 - The injection sites have an odor.
 - You feel very dizzy or light headed.