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Caudal Epidural Steroid Injection

What is it?

A caudal epidural steroid injection (caudal ESI) is an injection into the lowest part of the epidural space of the spine near the sacrum.

Why is it used?

A caudal ESI allows for both anesthetic and steroid to be placed directly into the epidural space to reduce chronic nerve inflammation and pain coming from the spine. Anesthetic is used to provide short term pain relief until the steroid is able to take effect (usually within 2-7 days). A caudal ESI can help treat chronic low back and leg pain caused by a variety of conditions such as sciatica, facet joint pain, herniated discs, and other common back problems. The procedure is effective in providing pain relief and provides significantly less risk and recovery time compared to a surgery.

How is it performed?

This injection is done under high-resolution ultrasound guidance which allows for proper identification of anatomical landmarks to ensure correct needle placement into the epidural space. The procedure is performed in-office and generally takes about 15 minutes. Local anesthetic will be given at the injection site to numb the skin prior to needle insertion to minimize discomfort.



What should I expect after the procedure?

You may feel pain relief and numbness immediately following the injection which indicates that the injection has reached the area of irritation. Most patients are able to return to work/activity the day following the injection. On the day of the injection, it is recommended that you take it easy to avoid aggravating the injury. Pain may return shortly after this period or even be a little worse for a short period of time until the steroid takes effect.

How long should I expect pain relief?

The duration of pain relief varies from patient to patient depending on the amount of inflammation present. If your pain is caused by injuries to more than one area, it is possible that only some of your symptoms will be helped by a single injection. Some people can expect long-term pain relief and will only need a single injection, while for other people pain relief lasts for several weeks to months.

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