

Epidural steroid injections are a safe and effective treatment for low back pain with sciatica as well as neck pain with radiating arm pain. These injections have been used since the 1950s. The goal of the epidural steroid injection is to reduce inflammation and swelling around the spinal structures. During the procedure, a powerful medication similar to cortisone will be injected into the epidural space. The epidural space is the area that surrounds the discs and nerves in the low back and neck.

Epidural steroid injections are used as part of a comprehensive pain management program including physical therapy, medications and other modalities to reduce pain.

Epidural steroid injections can safely be done 3-4 times per year. The injections should be spaced out by at least two weeks. Often, two to three injections need to be done to effectively alleviate the pain. If the injections are not providing significant relief, a discussion with the doctor or physician assistant is warranted to discuss further treatment options.

Side effects may include but are not limited to:

- Pain at the injection site
- Headache
- Increased blood sugar
- Water retention resulting in edema or leg swelling
- Facial flushing with the sensation of warmth and redness about the face and chest
- Irritability
- Sleeplessness
- Anxiety
- Burst of energy
- Skin discoloration at the injection site

You should contact your doctor or go to the ER if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Fever greater than 101 degrees for 24 hours (possible infection)
- Severe headaches with nausea and vomiting lasting greater than two days
- Loss of control of bowel or bladder function
- New onset of numbness, tingling or weakness

### Questions

The CORE Institute is dedicated to your outcome. If any questions or concerns arise, please call The CORE Institute at 1.866.974.2673.