



Stellate Ganglion Injection/Block

The stellate ganglion is a group of nerves located in the front of your neck between the seventh cervical vertebrae and the first thoracic vertebrae, on either side of the larynx (voice box).

The stellate ganglion transmits sympathetic nerve signals to your face and upper extremities, such as arms.

Your sympathetic nerves control heart rate, sweating, pupil dilation, temperature and many other important body functions.

Usually a series of 2-4 injections are required to provide an effective outcome in targeting the stellate ganglion.

WHY HAVE THIS PROCEDURE?

A stellate ganglion block helps to provide:

- Pain relief (sometimes short-term)
- Diagnostic feedback to identify an area of nerves that could be the focus of future treatments that may provide longer-term pain reduction.

A stellate ganglion block aims to reduce the following in the upper limbs:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Colour and sweating changes

THE PROCEDURE

- This will be carried out in the operating theatre by one of our pain specialists.
- An experienced anaesthetist may be present and may offer you a mild sedative if appropriate.
- You will be positioned lying on your back.
- X-rays will be taken that will allow accurate placement of the needle(s) and reduce the risks of side effects.
- Your pain specialist will use local anaesthetic to numb your skin before the procedure begins.
- Please tell your pain specialist if you experience pain during the procedure.
- Once the needle is in position, local anaesthetic mixed with an anti-inflammatory steroid will be injected.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

You will be monitored in the recovery area by nursing staff.

Your pain specialist may assess you before you are discharged from hospital. You may feel drowsy if you have had any sedation, and should not drive for the rest of the day. You should have someone to collect you from the hospital. The following day you may return to your usual activities.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Bleeding or bruising at the injection site.
- Hoarse voice
- Droopy eyelid, red eye, constricted pupil on the side of injection

RARE SIDE EFFECTS

These injections are safe because we perform them according to strict international standards but it is important that you are aware of any potential side effects, even if they are rare and do not occur commonly:

- Infection
- Inadvertent needle placement into adjacent structures, such as blood vessels or nerves
- Inadvertent local anaesthetic spread
- Local anaesthetic toxicity

MEDICATIONS

It is vital your pain specialist is aware of all your medications and known allergies.

If you take blood-thinning medication, such as warfarin or clopidogrel (Plavix), and these were not discussed at your outpatient appointment, please contact us before your procedure.

Aspirin is generally ok prior to your procedure but please confirm with our team.

You can take your regular pain medications with a small sip of water on the morning of your procedure.