

## **Stellate Ganglion Block**

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### **What is Stellate Ganglion block?**

Stellate ganglion block is an injection of local anesthetic (numbing medication) around the stellate ganglion nerves which are located in the front of the neck. Stellate ganglion block may be therapeutic (to relieve pain) and/or diagnostic (to determine the source of your pain).

The block may reduce symptoms such as pain, swelling, color change and sweating in your shoulder, arm or hand which is a result of your injury. Stellate ganglion block is also used to improve blood flow in patients with circulation problems.

### **How long does the effect last?**

Pain relief may last hours or days. If effective, your doctor may recommend a series of these blocks 1-2 weeks apart which may help give you more long term pain relief. Other options may include spinal cord stimulation.

### **How is the procedure done?**

You will be lying on your back on an X-ray table. Blood pressure, heart rate and breathing are monitored. The location of the stellate ganglion is identified and marked using fluoroscopy (X-ray). The injection area is cleansed with an antiseptic soap and the injection site is numbed. Your physician inserts a small needle through the skin and soft tissues. The needle is directed toward the ganglion nerves. When the needle is in the correct place, medication (local anesthetic) is injected around the ganglion. You then will be placed in a semi-sitting position and monitored.

### **What are the side effects and complications?**

The side effects and complications are uncommon. Potential complications include:

- Allergic reaction to medication
- Bleeding
- Pneumothorax (collapsed lung)
- Brachial plexus block (temporary numb arm that lasts for a few hours)
- Spinal block (temporary weakness or numbness from the neck down)
- Nerve damage
- Bruising at the injection site
- Injection of medication into a blood vessel

### **How should I prepare myself for this procedure?**

- A driver is required to give you a ride home after the procedure.
- If you are on any blood thinners, please call the clinic at 701-551-6980 to receive instructions about your medication.
- If you are having IV sedation, you should not have anything to eat or drink 8 hours before the procedure. You may take your medications and have clear liquids up to 2 hours before the procedure.

### **When should I call my doctor?**

You should call us immediately if any of the following occur:

- If you experience any swelling, redness, or drainage from the site of the injection
- If you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- If you experience a new numbness or weakness in your arms
- If you experience any chest pain or shortness of breath or persistent cough