

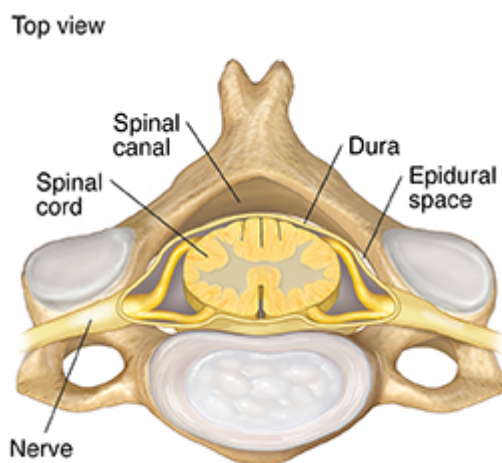
Cervical Epidural Injection



For certain types of neck pain, your doctor may suggest a cervical epidural injection. During this procedure, medicine (such as numbing medicine or a steroid) is injected deep into your neck near your spine. The injection helps the doctor find the source of your pain. It can also help ease your pain and soreness either temporarily or more permanently. But it can cause serious complications.

The cervical vertebrae

The cervical vertebrae are the bones that support your neck and head. They form the top part of your spine. The tunnel made by these vertebrae is called the spinal canal. The spinal cord runs through the spinal canal, inside a sac called the dura. Nerves branch off the spinal cord and exit between the vertebrae. Pressure on one of these nerves may cause it to become inflamed. An inflamed nerve in your neck may cause neck pain, numbness, or weakness that may also be felt in your head or arms.



The cervical epidural injection

In certain conditions, medicine can be injected into the epidural space. This space surrounds the dura within the spinal canal. Using an anesthetic to reduce discomfort from the procedure, a needle is inserted between the bones of the neck. When the correct location is reached, the medicine may be injected. The injection is usually done with the help of imaging such as fluoroscopy. Care is taken to ensure a sterile procedure to reduce the chance of infection (which is rare, but can be very serious). The procedure is typically done by one of several types of specialists such as a neurosurgeon, a pain specialist, an interventional radiologist, or anesthesiologist.

Possible risks and complications

- Infection
- Spinal headaches
- Bleeding
- Nerve damage
- Spinal cord damage
- Prolonged increase in pain

Serious complications of various types have been reported. Talk with your doctor.

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