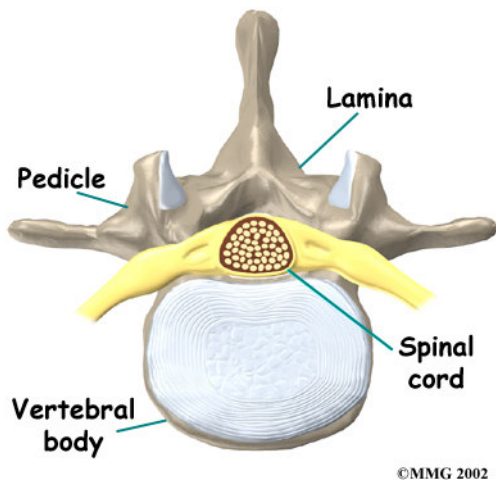


# LUMBAR TRANSFORAMINAL EPIDURAL INJECTION

## For Low Back and Leg Pain



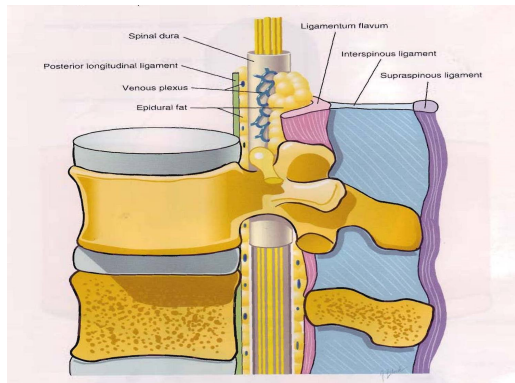
A lumbar transforaminal epidural injection is an outpatient procedure for diagnosing and treating low back and leg pain.

### What is the epidural space?

The membrane that covers the spinal cord and nerve roots in the spine is called the dura membrane. The space surrounding the dura is the epidural space. Nerves travel through the epidural space to the back and into the legs. Inflammation of these nerve roots may cause pain in these regions due to irritation from a damaged disc or from contact in some way with the bony structure of the spine.

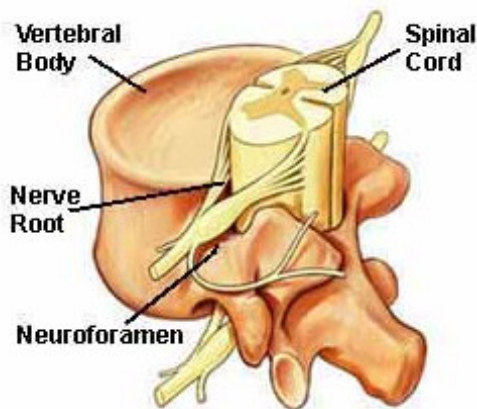
### What is an epidural and why is it helpful?

An epidural injection places anti-inflammatory medicine into the epidural space to decrease inflammation of the nerve roots, hopefully reducing the pain in the back or legs. The epidural injection may help the injury to heal by reducing inflammation. It may provide permanent relief or provide a period of pain relief for several months while the injury/cause of pain is healing.



### What happens during the procedure?

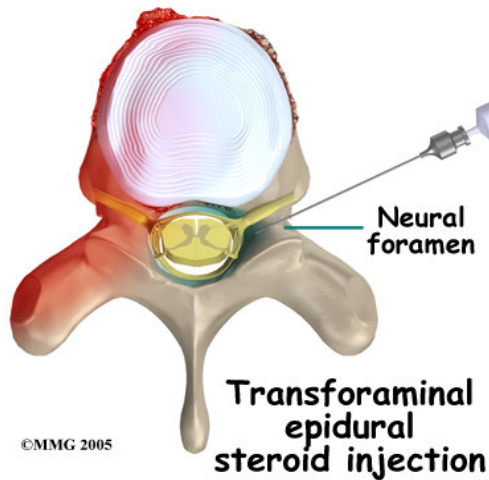
An IV is started so that relaxation medication can be given. The patient is placed lying on their side on the x-ray table and positioned in such a way that the physician can best visualize the low back using x-ray guidance. The skin on the back is scrubbed using 2 types of sterile scrub (soap). Next, the physician numbs a small area of skin with numbing medicine. This medicine stings for several seconds. After the numbing medicine has been given time to be effective, the physician directs a small needle, using x-ray guidance into the epidural space through the bony opening of the exiting nerve root. A small amount of contrast (dye) is injected to insure the needle is properly positioned in the epidural space. A mixture of numbing medicine (anesthetic) and anti-inflammatory (cortisone/steroid) is injected.



Spinal Nerve Structures

### What happens after the procedure?

Patients are then returned to the recovery area where they are monitored for 30-60 minutes. Patients are then asked to record



the relief they experience during the next week on a post injection evaluation sheet ("pain diary"). This will be available online.

**How will I feel after the procedure?**

A follow-up appointment will be made for a repeat block if indicated. These injections are usually done in a series of three (3), about two (2) weeks apart. The back or legs may feel weak or numb for a few hours. This is to be expected, however it does not always happen.

Ice is typically more helpful than heat during the first 2-3 days after the injection.

You may begin to notice an improvement in your pain 2-5 days after the injection. If you do not notice improvement within 10 days after the injection, another treatment may be indicated.

You may take your regular medications after the procedure, but try to limit any pain medications for the first 4-6 hours after the procedure. This will ensure that the diagnostic information obtained from the procedure is accurate.

You may be referred for physical therapy, chiropractic care or massage after the injection while the numbing medicine is effective and/or over the several weeks while the cortisone is working.

Patients are generally asked to be at the appropriate facility one hour prior to the procedure and can expect to be at that facility approximately 2-3 hours. A driver must accompany the patient and be responsible for getting them home. No driving is allowed the day of the procedure. Patients may return to their normal activities the day after the procedure, including returning to work.

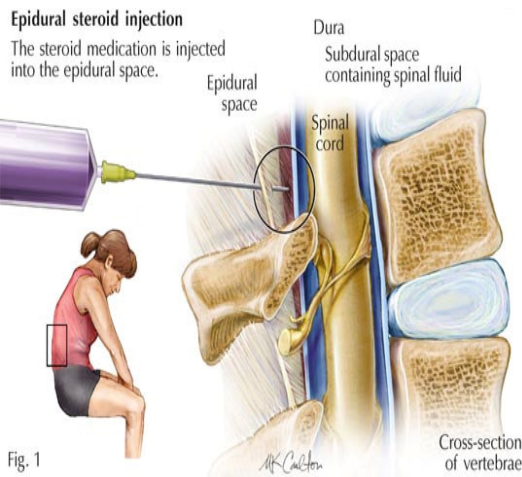


Fig. 1