

# Sympathetic Nerve Block

## What are sympathetic nerves?

The sympathetic nervous system is a network of nerves throughout your body. The nerve branches originate from your spine. A problem with these nerves can affect blood flow. Symptoms are often felt in the hands or feet. They may hurt, burn, feel cold, or be tender to the touch. The sympathetic nervous system is controlled by bunches of nerves called ganglions. One large ganglion, called the stellate ganglion, helps control nerves in the upper body. In the lower body, nerves are controlled by several ganglions that make up the lumbar sympathetic chain.

## Why is a sympathetic nerve block helpful?

A sympathetic nerve block is a special procedure. It helps your doctor find the cause of your symptoms. This “blocks’ the sympathetic nerves in that region. If these nerves are causing your problem, the injection will relieve symptoms for a while. The injection blocks the sympathetic nerves and helps relax your blood vessels.

## What will happen to me during the procedure?

Lying on a table, the skin over the injection site is well cleaned. A local anesthetic numbs the skin. Fluoroscopy may be used to help your doctor see where the medication goes. A contrast “dye” may be added to the medication to help get a better image. A local anesthetic is injected near the ganglion to numb the nerves. If the sympathetic nerves are causing your problem, the temperature in your hands or feet may increase. The block will relieve your symptoms for a while.

## What should I do after the procedure?

You will stay in recovery for about an hour. Once you can walk, you can go home. A neck injection may cause the eyelid on that side of your face to droop a little. Your voice may also be hoarse. These things will go away in a few hours when the anesthetic wears off. Your doctor can tell you when it’s okay to return to normal function.

Pre & Post Procedure instructions can be found under the General Information tab, then select Procedures

*Reminder:* You must have a driver with you for your procedure

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