

Suprascapular Nerve Block

More information is available at <http://www.fpmx.com.au/frankston-pain-management-services.html>

Q1 What is a Suprascapular nerve block?

It is an injection of anaesthetic and/or steroid around the Suprascapular nerve is an important the main nerve supplying the shoulder joint.

Q2 What is the purpose of a Suprascapular nerve block?

This outpatient procedure is used to treat pain and discomfort from arthritis, bursitis, impingement and rotator cuff tears in the shoulder. Nerve blocks can be diagnostic by confirming the origin of the pain. They may also be therapeutic in some patients by providing sustained pain relief and functional improvement by breaking the pain cycle and reducing inflammation around the affected nerve.

Q3 How is the injection done?

The skin is washed with antiseptic and 'numbed'. Nerve blocks (with or without sedation), are performed using ultrasound, fluoroscopy (xray) guided needle and anaesthetic/steroid placement close to the nerve.

Q4 What is the expected benefit?

Pain relief. Nerve blocks reduce pain and sensitivity, allowing improved ability to exercise to maintain the benefit. Pain relief may last a few days, weeks or many months.

Q6 What are the Risks?

Immediately after the treatment you may have temporary numbness, arm weakness and injection site tenderness for a few days. There is a small risk of bleeding, infection and nerve damage, however the vast majority of patients do not have any complications. There is also a small chance of puncturing the lung; if this occurs you may require an xray, hospital admission and possibly further treatment. Side effects from the injected steroid may include weight gain, increased blood sugar, fluid retention and immune suppression.

Q7 What should I worry about?

After the procedure, if you do feel sharp pain on breathing different to your previous pain, or moderate to severe shortness of breath, you should tell the nurse or doctor. If this occurs after you return home, you should discuss your symptoms with your doctor or, if severely affected, attend the accident and emergency department.

Q7 How many injections will be needed?

If the injection does not fully relieve the symptoms in a week or two, a second injection or pulsed radiofrequency treatment may be recommended.

Q8 What should I do after the procedure?

We advise patients to take it easy until the numbing medicine has worn off, then you can perform activity as tolerated. You may need someone to drive you home after some nerve blocks.

Q9 Can I go to work the next day?

Yes. Unless there are complications, you should be able to return to your work the next day. The most common thing you may feel is injection site soreness. Ice at the injection site will help with the soreness. You may also take ibuprofen or paracetamol for the discomfort.

Q10 What do I do next?

The aim of the suprascapular nerve block is to reduce your pain to allow gentle stretching and graded exercise program. Other treatment options include physiotherapy, medications, TENS, radiofrequency treatment.

Important Notes:

You must not eat/drink for 4 hours before the procedure.

Please take your normal medicines with a sip of water except blood thinners (aspirin is OK), insulin and diabetic tablets.

Ask your doctor for specific instructions if you are taking these medicines.