

# Stellate Ganglion Block

## What is a stellate ganglion block and why is it performed?

- The stellate ganglion is part of the sympathetic nervous system. It's located in the lower-front part of the neck. A stellate ganglion block is an injection of local anesthetic into these nerves.
- This procedure can be used to diagnose sympathetically mediated pain. A stellate ganglion block is also commonly used to treat pain of the head, neck and upper limbs resulting from complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). The goal of the procedure is to help the patient participate in restorative therapy (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, exercise) and achieve functional improvement.

## What to do before the procedure

- Arrange for someone to bring you to the hospital and take you home.

## What to expect during the procedure

- You will need to lie flat for this procedure, with a pillow under your shoulders to tilt your head back. Your neck will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and your face will be covered with sterile towels. Only your neck will be exposed. You will need to remain still and refrain from swallowing or talking until the injection is complete.
- Although this procedure will take approximately 1 to 3 minutes to complete, you will need to rest with your head raised for 15 minutes following the procedure.

## What to expect after the procedure

- You should NOT eat or drink anything for 2 hours after this procedure or until any voice hoarseness disappears. Sometimes the nerves to the voice box also become anesthetized. When you do resume drinking, start by taking sips of cold water. If you notice difficulty with swallowing, wait another hour and then try again. Once you are sure you have no difficulty swallowing, you can resume a normal diet.

## Side effects and risks

- In the 10 hours after this procedure, you may experience the following on the injected side:
  - Difficulty swallowing (feels like there is a lump in the throat), hoarse voice, stuffy nose
  - Droopy upper eyelid, eye redness, unequal eye pupil size, increased skin warmth
- There is a rare, yet serious, risk of the following complications: infection, puncture of the vascular and nerve structures, esophagus or lung puncture, stroke, seizure, paralysis.
- **If you experience shortness of breath or neck swelling, seek medical attention by contacting the pain clinic (519-646-6100 ext. 61786) or going to the emergency room.**

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