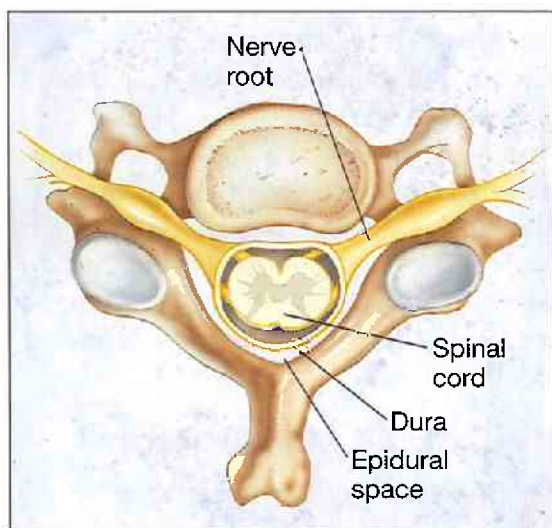


# CERVICAL EPIDURAL INJECTION

## The Epidural Space

The **cervical vertebrae** are the bones in the neck. They form the top part of the spine. The tunnel these vertebrae make is called the **spinal canal**. The **spinal cord** runs through the spinal canal, inside a sac called the **dura**. The space around the dura within the spinal canal is the **epidural space**. Nerves branch off the spinal cord through the vertebrae and into the epidural space. Pressure on one of the branching nerves may cause it to become **inflamed** (irritated and swollen). This may cause neck, arm, or head pain. You may also feel arm weakness or numbness.



## Cervical Epidural Injections

To help relieve neck and arm pain, medication is injected into the epidural space. Your doctor may also do a **nerve block**. During this, medication is injected near a specific **nerve root** (the part of the nerve that leaves the spinal canal). A nerve block can help your doctor find out which nerve or nerves cause your pain.

## Discussing Your Results

The injection may provide pain relief for weeks to months. But in some cases, you may need a series of injections to get pain relief. Or, another type of treatment may be needed. See your doctor for a follow-up visit to discuss the results of your injection.

### Special Instructions:

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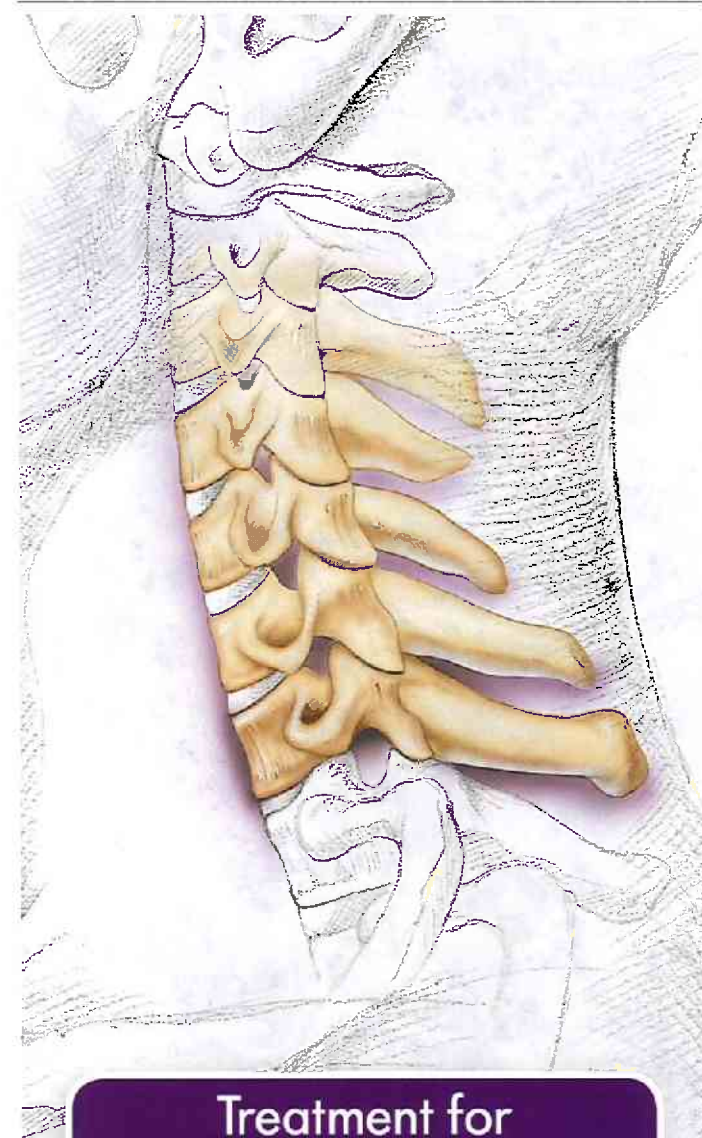
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Treatment for  
Pain Relief

## Relieving Neck and Arm Pain

For certain types of neck pain, your doctor may suggest a **cervical epidural injection**. Medication is injected into your neck near your spine. The injection helps the doctor find the source of pain. It can also help relieve pain and soreness.

### Getting Ready

- At least a week before treatment, tell your doctor what medications, herbs, or supplements you take (including pain relievers and drugs to prevent blood clots). Ask whether you should stop taking any of them before treatment.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or allergic to any medications.
- Stop eating or drinking as directed before you check in for your injection.
- Bring any tests or test results you have to your treatment.
- Arrange for a family member or friend to drive you home.



▶▶ If a nerve problem is causing neck pain, a cervical epidural injection may help.

## Your Injection Experience

The injection is done in a hospital, surgery center, or office procedure suite. You'll be asked to fill out some forms, including a consent form.

### During the Procedure

You may be given an **IV** (intravenous) line in your arm or hand. To help you relax, medication may be given through the IV line. You will be positioned on an exam table or in a chair. Stay as still as you can. During the treatment:

- The skin over the injection site is cleaned. It is then numbed with anesthetic.
- **Fluoroscopy** (x-ray imaging) may be used to help your doctor see where the injection needs to go. A contrast fluid may be injected into the region to help make the image clearer.
- The injection is given. It likely contains a medication to numb the area and another to reduce inflammation.
- You can often go home in about an hour. Have an adult relative or friend drive you.

## Risks and Complications

**!** *These may include:*

- Infection
- Spinal headaches
- Bleeding or fluid leakage in the spinal cord
- Nerve damage
- Prolonged increase in pain
- Allergic reaction



▶▶ Take it easy for the rest of the day after the injection, even if you feel good.

## After the Procedure

When the numbness wears off, your neck may feel more sore than usual. This is normal. Rest and put a cold pack on the area for 20 minutes a few times during the first day. The steroids most often begin to work in 2 to 4 days, but can take up to 2 weeks to have full effect. Ask your doctor when it's okay to return to work and driving.

## When to Call the Doctor

**📞** *Call your doctor if you have:*

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Nausea
- Severe headaches
- Increased arm weakness or numbness
- Problems swallowing
- Severe increase in pain