



Lumbar Sympathetic Block

This procedure is done to relieve leg pain from Complex Regional Pain Syndromes, which may appear after an injury to a joint or limb. Usually a series of these injections is needed to treat the problem.

STEP 1

Patients lie either on their side or stomach on a table equipped with a special x-ray (fluoroscopic) unit, and an intravenous (IV) line is started to administer medication that relaxes the patient. A local anesthetic numbs the skin and all the tissue down to the sympathetic nerves.

STEP 2

The physician slides a needle through the anesthetized track. A contrast solution is injected so the physician can use an x-ray (fluoroscope) to see the painful areas and to confirm the correct location of the needle tip.

STEP 3

Next, a mixture of anesthetic, saline and anti-inflammatory medicine is injected around the sympathetic nerves to block pain signals from reaching the brain.

END OF PROCEDURE

The legs may feel weak or numb for a few hours after the procedure. Then, pain from the legs should improve. More blocks may be repeated about once a week until the pain subsides. Patients who are on blood thinning medications or who have an infection near the injection site should not receive the block.