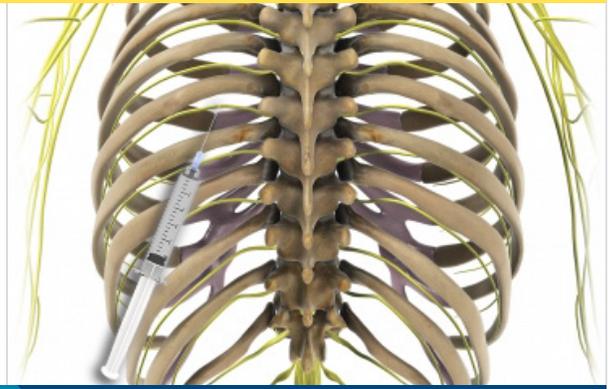


Intercostal Nerve Block



An intercostal nerve block is an injection of corticosteroid medication given to block the nerves located under the ribs. This block can be used for pain in the upper back, flank, or chest wall.

Duration

Less than 30 minutes

How is it performed?

This procedure is performed using fluoroscopic x-ray and will take place in the surgery center. For the procedure, you will lie on your stomach on the x-ray table. Local anesthetic will be used to numb the skin overlying the injection area. A dye will be injected to help identify the area to be treated. Once identified, the medication will be injected. If neurolysis is being performed, dehydrated alcohol will be used.

Prior to your appointment

You will have the option of receiving no sedation or:

- oral sedation – or –
- intravenous sedation

If choosing sedation, you must not eat for six hours or drink anything for four hours before the procedure.

You may continue taking all medications except blood thinners before the procedure.

Please see your medication handout to determine when to hold and resume blood thinners or ask your doctor.

[more on back](#) ▶

Conditions treated

You may benefit from an intercostal nerve block if you suffer from:

- Rib fracture
- Intercostal neuralgia
- Post-thoracotomy pain

To schedule a procedure

Please contact the nurse navigators to schedule any procedure.

- for McCullough-Hyde
Ross Medical Center, call
513 246 7182*
- for Good Samaritan Hospital and
Bethesda Surgery Center, call
513 246 7958*

*Please note these numbers are for scheduling only

To ask other questions

Please call 513 246 7000. Select Option 3 three times.

Intercostal Nerve Block

◀ continued from front

What are some of the risks and side effects?

As with procedures of this type, there is a risk of infection or bleeding. Rarely, nerve damage can occur.

Short-term side effects of numbness, weakness and increased pain may occur. It is common to feel discomfort at the needle puncture site.

A rare risk of lung collapse is possible due to the closeness of the needle to the lung. If you develop any shortness of breath after the procedure, you should go to an emergency room to get a chest x-ray and call your pain physician.

Steroids will cause elevated blood sugar and can increase your blood pressure. You may also develop temporary flushing, muscle cramping, increased appetite and difficulty sleeping. This will typically resolve in 1 week but can last several weeks.

What to expect after the procedure

You may feel a weak or numb sensation where the medication was injected. As the numbing medication wears off, you may experience an increase in pain. Once the steroid begins to work, you should experience pain relief in 3-5 days.

Ice is typically more helpful than heat during the first few days after the injection.

You should not drive or engage in physical activity for 24 hours following the procedure.

You may resume medications and regular eating habits immediately.