

## Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection

### WHAT IS A CERVICAL EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTION?

A cervical epidural steroid injection (CESI) is a minimally invasive procedure designed to ease pain caused by inflammation in the neck. This injection delivers a blend of corticosteroids and a local anesthetic into the epidural space — the area surrounding the spinal cord and nerve roots in the upper spine. Corticosteroids work to reduce inflammation, while the anesthetic offers immediate pain relief.

### WHO MIGHT BENEFIT?

CESIs are often recommended for patients experiencing neck pain that radiates into the shoulders, arms, or hands due to conditions such as:

- Herniated or bulging discs in the neck
- Cervical spinal stenosis
- Degenerative disc disease
- Cervical radiculopathy (pinched nerve)

### HOW DOES THE PROCEDURE WORK?

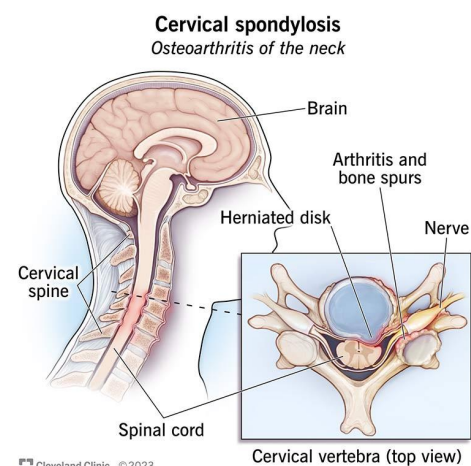
- **Procedure Technique:** X-ray guidance (fluoroscopy) ensures precision as the physician guides a small needle into the cervical epidural space. A contrast dye may be used first to confirm the needle's correct position, followed by the medication mixture.
- **Medication Effect:** The corticosteroid (like dexamethasone) reduces inflammation and swelling around the nerves over a few days, potentially providing relief lasting weeks to months, depending on your condition.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS?

- **No relief:** Some patients may not respond to the injection, or relief could be minimal.
- **Temporary discomfort:** Soreness at the injection site might linger for 1–2 days.
- **Rare complications:** Risks are low but include infection, bleeding, or nerve irritation. Very rare risks involve spinal headache (from accidental dural puncture) or allergic reactions to the medication.
- **Side effects from steroids:** Temporary flushing, increased blood sugar (especially in diabetics), or mild mood changes may occur.

### BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

- **Medication Review:** Let your provider know about all medications, especially blood thinners or anticoagulants, as these may need to be paused a few days prior.
- **Medical Conditions:** Inform us of conditions like diabetes or infections, or any recent illnesses.
- **Diet:** Stick to your normal diet for office procedures. If done at a surgery center with IV sedation, fasting will be required.



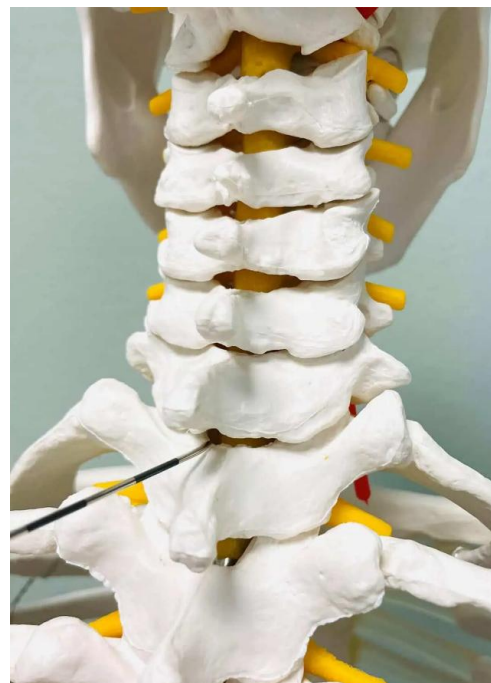
*Cervical spondylosis — a common source of cervical nerve root pain*

## THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE

- **Preparation:** You will need a driver due to possible temporary arm weakness or numbness from the anesthetic. Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- **Procedure:** It takes about 5–10 minutes. You'll lie face down or sit upright, and X-ray guidance ensures accuracy. A small needle delivers the medication into the epidural space.
- **Afterward:** You will get post-procedure instructions and be monitored briefly before going home.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- **Activity Restrictions:** Rest for the rest of the day. Resume normal activities the next day. Avoid soaking the area (baths, pools, etc.) for 2 days, but showering is fine. Resume your usual diet.
- **Immediate relief?:** You might feel better for a few hours due to the anesthetic, but this fades. True relief from the steroid takes 3–7 days.
- **Post-procedure soreness:** Mild discomfort at the injection site is normal. Use ice packs (20–30 minutes every 1–2 hours) to ease it. Avoid heat for 1–2 days.
- **Full effect:** Pain relief often peaks within 1–2 weeks. If other pain sources (e.g., facet joints or muscles) persist, you might notice them more once epidural pain lessens. Relief can last from days to months, depending on the individual.
- **Follow-up:** A 2–3 week check-in helps us review your results and plan next steps.



*A needle is placed between the neck bones under X-ray to reach the epidural space.*

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our clinic at (775) 870-1480. We hope to provide the best experience possible for you.**

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