

### How many injections do I need to have?

If you respond to the first injection, it may be recommended that you receive repeat injections. A series of injections is usually needed to treat the problem. The response for such injections varies from patient to patient; therefore the number of injections may vary as well.

### Will the Lumbar Sympathetic Block help me?

The patients who present early during their illness tend to respond better. Patients in the advanced stages of disease may not respond adequately. It is difficult to predict if the injections will indeed help you or not.

### What are the risks and side effects?

Generally this procedure is safe, however with any procedure there are risks, side effects or possible complications. The risks, although infrequent, include: allergic reaction to the medications, nerve damage, bruising at the injection site, infection at the site, injection of medication into a blood vessel.

### Who should not have this injection?

If you are allergic to any of the medications involved in the procedure, if you are on a blood thinning medication, or if you have an active ongoing infection, you should not have the injection.

## Appointment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Coumadin:

Date to stop: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*INR is needed the day before injection appointment. If INR is too high appointment may be rescheduled.\*\*\*

Plavix:

Date to stop: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Ask your GP if it is safe to be off a blood thinner or if you need to go onto another, such as Tinzaparin.



## LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC BLOCKS

### PAIN CLINIC

### PATIENT INFORMATION



[www.maximmag.co.uk/images/library\\_UK\\_8/15\\_back\\_pain\\_tips\\_4441\\_13.jpg](http://www.maximmag.co.uk/images/library_UK_8/15_back_pain_tips_4441_13.jpg)

[www.viha.ca/pain\\_program](http://www.viha.ca/pain_program)

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is a Lumbar Sympathetic Block?

A lumbar Sympathetic Block (injection) is one method used to provide pain relief by blocking the pain-inducing sympathetic nerve in the lumbar (lower) region of the back. The nerves are located on either side of the spine.

### What is the purpose of a Lumbar Block?

The Lumbar injection blocks the Sympathetic Nerves. This may reduce pain and swelling and may improve mobility. The block is done as part of the treatment of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), Sympathetic Maintained Pain, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, and Herpes Zoster (shingles) pain involving the upper and lower extremities.

### How long does the injection take?

The actual injection takes only a few minutes. A total procedure under fluoroscopy (similar to an X-ray) may take up to 30 minutes.

### What is actually injected?

The injection consist of a local anesthetic (lidocaine or bupivacaine).

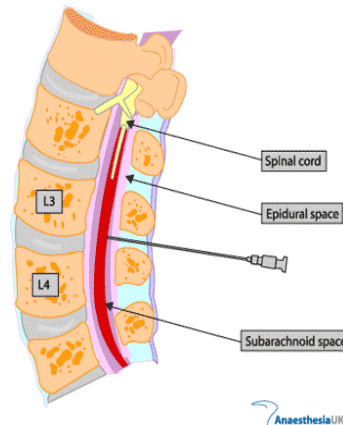
### Will the injection hurt?

Some discomfort is involved because the procedure involves inserting a needle through the skin and deeper tissues. We numb the skin and deeper tissues using a very thin needle prior to inserting the larger needle. You will usually feel strong pressure and not much pain.

### How is the injection performed?

The procedure is performed with the patient lying on their stomach. Your vital signs such as, blood pressure, pulse and oxygen saturation will be recorded. You will be monitored with an Electrocardiogram (ECG/EKG) as well.

The skin on the back is cleaned with antiseptic solution prior to the injection. Fluoroscopy (X-rays) may be used to guide the needle(s) into the proper position.



<http://www.anaesthesiuk.com/article.aspx?articleid=100126>

### What should I expect after the injection?

Immediately after the injection, you may feel your upper and lower extremities getting warm. You may notice that your pain may be gone or lessened. You may notice weakness and/or numbness in your extremities this is temporary.

### What can I do after the procedure?

You should arrange for a ride home. We advise that you take it easy for a day or two after the procedure. Perform your daily activities as tolerated by you.

Unless there are complications you should be able to return to work the next day.

You can apply ice on the injection site on and off (approximately 15 minutes at a time). You can take something for pain before the local anesthetic wears off. Avoid taking a bath or soak in a hot tub until the following day.

### How long do the effects of the medication last?

The local anesthetic wears off in a few hours. The blockade of the nerves may last for many hours. Usually the duration of relief gets longer after each injection.