



# INTERVENTIONAL SPINE & PAIN INSTITUTE OF NEW ENGLAND

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## MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK

### **What to expect during your procedure?:**

The injection procedure includes the following steps:

- The patient lies on an x-ray table and the skin over the area to be tested is well cleansed.
- The physician treats a small area of skin with a numbing medicine (anesthetic), which may sting for a few seconds.
- The physician uses x-ray guidance (fluoroscopy) to direct a very small needle over the medial branch nerves.
- Several drops of contrast dye are then injected to confirm that the medicine only goes over these medial branch nerves.
- Following this confirmation, a small mixture of numbing medicine (anesthetic) will then be slowly injected into each targeted nerve.

The injection itself only takes a few minutes, but the entire procedure usually takes between fifteen and thirty minutes.

After the procedure, the patient is asked to move the affected area to try to provoke the usual pain. Patients may or may not obtain pain relief in the first few hours after the injection, depending upon whether or not the medial branch nerves that were injected are carrying pain signals from the spinal joints to the brain. On occasion, patients may feel numb or have a slightly weak or odd feeling in their neck or back for a few hours after the injection.

The patient will discuss with the doctor any immediate pain relief. Ideally, patients will also record the levels of pain relief during the next several hours in a pain diary. A pain diary is helpful to clearly inform the treating physician of the injection results and in planning future tests and/or treatment, as needed.

This procedure is a test procedure. Any pain relief you experience will be temporary. Should you have significant pain relief, you will be considered a good candidate for a Radiofrequency Ablation in the future. Some insurance companies require 2 test procedures prior to the Radiofrequency Ablation.

