



INTERCOSTAL NERVE BLOCK

As part of your treatment at Premier Pain Consultants, your doctor will perform a procedure called an intercostal nerve block. The purpose of this procedure is to decrease pain and to increase circulation in the area of your pain. This is done by injecting a local anesthetic along each nerve near the ribs that are involved with your pain. When circulation is increased, more oxygen and nourishment are brought to the area. The duration of pain relief from this local anesthetic can vary from 1-2 hours to many hours. If your pain is relieved by this procedure, a series of blocks may be desired as an attempt to break the pain cycle.

General Pre-Injection Instructions – Please tell your doctor if you have any allergies, particularly to contrast dye or iodine, topical or intravenous. You may eat a light meal 6 hours before the procedure. If you are an insulin-dependent diabetic, you must not change your normal eating pattern prior to the procedure. You may take your routine medications (i.e., high blood pressure and diabetic medications, e.g. Glucophage). However, you will need to take only half of your usual dose of insulin the day of the procedure. You should hold your pain medications or anti-inflammatory medications the day of your procedure. If you are on a blood thinner (Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, etc.), you must notify your physician's office so the timing of the discontinuation of these medications can be explained. **A driver must accompany the patient and be responsible for getting him/her home.**

What happens during the procedure? A physician will explain this nerve block and the possible complications. A written consent will be obtained prior to the procedure. You will be lying on your abdomen during the procedure and your heartbeat and blood pressure will be monitored very closely. All measures will be taken to make you as comfortable as possible. The procedure itself takes approximately 30 minutes and an x-ray will be obtained after the injection.

The physician will use an x-ray machine during this procedure. If you are pregnant, it is important to inform your physician.

What happens after the procedure? The following may occur after the injection: infection, bleeding, dizziness, nerve damage, nausea and hypotension. **The major complication after this procedure is called a pneumothorax. It is a puncture and collapse of the lung.** Symptoms include difficulty breathing, shoulder pain, coughing, increased pain when coughing, or deep breathing. Treatment of a pneumothorax is dependent on its size: nothing may need to be done, versus lying on your side breathing oxygen, versus admission to the hospital and placement of a chest tube to re-expand the lung.

No driving is allowed on the day of the procedure. You must bring someone to drive you home after the procedure.