

Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection: What to Expect at Home

Your Recovery

During your lumbar epidural injection, your doctor injected steroid medicine into the area around your spinal cord to help with pain, tingling, or numbness.

Steroids don't always work. And when they do, it takes a few days. But the pain relief can last for several days to a few months or longer.

Your injection may also have included a numbing medicine that works right away for a short time. It may leave your legs feeling heavy or numb at first. You will probably be able to walk. But you may need to be extra careful.

The effects of the numbing medicine should wear off in a few hours.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to feel better as quickly as possible.

How can you care for yourself at home?



Activity

- You may want to do less than normal for a few days. But you may also be able to return to your daily routine.
- You may shower if your doctor okays it. Do not take a bath for the first 24 hours, or until your doctor tells you it is okay.



Diet

- You can eat your normal diet.



Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. You will also get instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you stopped taking aspirin or some other blood thinner, your doctor will tell you when to start taking it again.
- Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.



Ice

- If the site of your injection feels sore or tender, put ice or a cold pack on it for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have trouble breathing.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new pain, or your pain gets worse.
- You have new numbness in your buttocks or legs.
- You have new weakness in your buttocks or legs.
- You have a severe headache.
- You have new loss of bowel or bladder control.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - A fever.

Watch closely for any changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better as expected.

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