

LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC BLOCK

WHAT IS A LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC BLOCK?

SYMPATHETICALLY MAINTAINED PAIN (sometimes referred to as RSD or COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME) can be influenced by special nerves that can regulate blood flow, sweating, and certain types of pain. "Sympathetic" nerves are located along the front of the entire spinal column. In the lower part of the back they are called Lumbar Sympathetic Ganglia.

The Lumbar Sympathetic Ganglia are "blocked" or anesthetized to determine whether or not symptoms such as pain, swelling, color changes, cold feeling, and increased sensitivity to light touch are influenced by the sympathetic nerves. These symptoms may appear in you legs and feet.

HOW IS IT DONE?

The block is accomplished by using small needles to place a local anesthetic medicine - such as Novocain- near the sympathetic nerves using x-ray. If the "block" provides relief, then a series of 6 to 12 of these blocks may be tried for purposes of treatment and should be coordinated with physical therapy.

TIME?

The LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC BLOCK takes less than 30 minutes. Light sedation provides comfort during this procedure. Afterwards patients are asked to evaluate change in pain level and any increase in physical abilities or movement of the affected extremity, and report these results to the referring physician.

RISKS

There are common side effects and potential risks associated with this procedure.