

STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK

What is a Stellate Ganglion Block?

The Stellate Ganglia are sympathetic nerves located along the front of the spine in the neck. These special nerves regulate blood flow, sweating and fluid retention to the upper extremities. If there is damage to the nerves they can become a source of pain.

How is a Stellate Ganglion Block performed?

Before the procedure the physician will meet with you and answer all of your questions. You will be moved to an x-ray table and a nurse will give you a light sedative to relax you. The physician will use the x-ray machine to place a needle near the Stellate Ganglia and inject an anesthetic medication. After the injection you will be taken to the recovery room where a nurse will monitor you and give you discharge instructions.

How long does the procedure take?

The injection takes between 15 and 30 minutes. You are asked to arrive 60 minutes before your appointment time in order to complete your paperwork and physical assessment. You will stay in the recovery room approximately 30 minutes and will then be discharged to your designated driver.

What can I expect after the Stellate Ganglion block?

Immediately after the block you may experience a decrease in your pain. You may note redness and a feeling of warmth in the affected arm and/or hand. You may have a hoarse voice, droopy eyelid, dilated pupil and difficulty swallowing or a feeling of a lump in your throat. These are all signs that the local anesthetic has reached the area of the Stellate Ganglia and will gradually go away over the next several hours. It is important that you not eat or drink anything until your ability to swallow has returned.

The duration of relief is different with each person. You will need to evaluate your pain relief for 3 to 4 hours after the injection and report the results to your physician.