

## How do I care for myself at home?

- **Do not** take a bath, go swimming, or use a hot tub for the next 24 hours. You may shower any time.
- Remove the bandage(s) 24 hours after the procedure or if it becomes wet (i.e., if you take a shower).
- If the injection site is painful, apply ice or a cold pack over the injection site no more than 15 minutes at a time, about two to three times each day as needed.
- You can take an anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen, or medication that you normally take for pain.
- You may eat and drink as usual.
- Avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours.

### When to get help

Contact your primary care provider or the pain program if you have:

- redness or swelling at the injection site(s)
- headache that does not go away
- fever above 38.5°C (101°F)
- significant weakness and/or numbness in your leg(s)

If your primary care provider is unavailable, go to the nearest emergency department.

## Locations

Royal Jubilee Hospital  
Memorial Pavilion 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
1952 Bay Street, Victoria  
Tel: 250-519-1836

Central Island Pain Program  
Nanaimo Regional General Hospital 2nd Floor  
1200 Dufferin Crescent, Nanaimo  
Tel: 250-739-5978

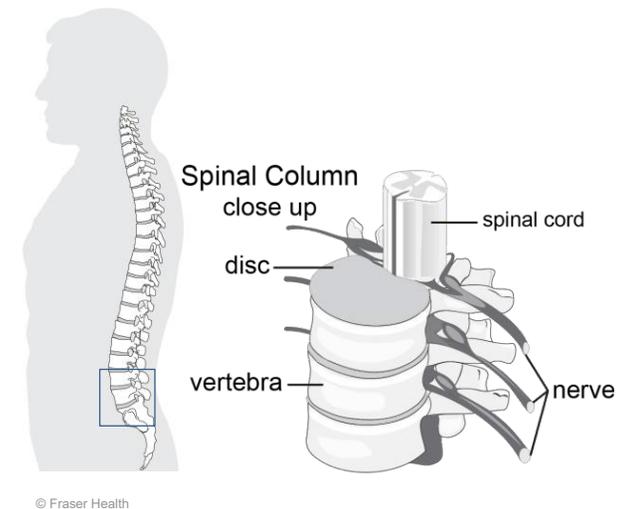


Island Health Pain Program Website:  
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-services/pain-program-services/pain-program>



## Lumbar Sympathetic Nerve Block

Pain Management Clinic



## What is a lumbar sympathetic nerve block?

A block is an injection of a local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) near a group of nerves. The freezing “numbs” the nerves (similar to dental freezing) and blocks the danger “signals.” When a block is done near a group of sympathetic nerves in the lower back, it is called a lumbar sympathetic block.

## Why is a lumbar sympathetic block done?

A lumbar sympathetic block is usually done to treat leg or foot pain. Blocking the sympathetic nerves can reduce pain, swelling, colour, and sweating changes in your leg(s). It may improve blood flow and your ability to get around, and is often done for this reason.

A lumbar sympathetic block can also be used to find out if the nerves in your back are contributing to your leg or foot pain.

## Who completes this procedure?

The physician will explain and complete the procedure, which takes about 15 minutes.

## Will I be asleep for this procedure?

- No, you are awake during the procedure.
- The physician uses local anesthetic (numbing medication) to treat the targeted area.

## Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, a relative or friend can stay with you before and after the procedure. However, for safety reasons, they cannot be in the room with you during the procedure.

## How do I prepare for this procedure?

- Wear loose comfortable clothing that is easy to remove, if needed.
- Tell the physician and nurses if you have any allergies, such as the contrast dye used for x-ray procedures or local anesthetics.
- You may eat and drink, but restrict your intake to a light meal before your procedure.
- Unless instructed otherwise, do not stop taking your regular medications.
- **If you take blood thinners (e.g., Warfarin), please tell the physician at least 7 days before your procedure.**

Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive or escort you home after the procedure, or else your procedure may be cancelled.

## What happens during the procedure?

An IV (intravenous) will be inserted into a vein in your arm.

You lie on your stomach on the x-ray table.

The area to be injected will be cleaned with antiseptic solution (that can be clear or pink in color).

The physician:

- Guides the needle close to the nerve using x-ray images. It is important to lie still.
- Injects anesthetic (numbing medication) into the area around the nerve.
- Places a small bandage over the area when the procedure is complete.

## What happens after the procedure?

We move you to a recovery area to rest for about 20 minutes. We check the skin temperature and feeling in your feet.

## Are there any risks or complications?

Although an injection is generally safe, no procedure is risk free. Potential side effects include, but are not limited to:

- Increase or worsening of pain for 1 to 2 days after the injection.
- Bruising at the injection site.
- Numbness or tingling, and weakness of the legs. This is a result of the local anesthetic, and may last a couple hours.