



## FAQS—IMAGE-GUIDED PAIN MANAGEMENT INJECTIONS

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### **What Are the Risks Involved?**

The risks of image-guided pain management injections include infection, bleeding, nerve injury and inadvertent injury to the adjacent structures. These are very uncommon. Ask your doctor or call WIS at 425-688-0100 if you have any concerns. There is also a theoretical risk of x-ray exposure. However, the doses used at Washington Imaging Services are very low and are not associated with any long-term or adverse effects. There is slight risk that you could react to the medications we use. In the rare event of an allergy or contrast reaction, our technologists and physicians are trained to handle the situation.

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### **Are There Any Contraindications That May Prevent a Patient from Having a Pain Injection?**

Contraindications for the procedure include weighing over 400 pounds, being pregnant or using aspirin or anticoagulants such as Plavix, Coumadin or Warfarin.

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### **How Do I Prepare for the Procedure?**

The general preparation guidelines for our image-guided pain injection procedures are listed below. You may receive additional or differing guidelines based on your specific situation when a WIS employee contacts you before your procedure. You may also talk to the radiologist prior to having your procedure to have any remaining questions answered.

- Aspirin, Coumadin and other anti-clotting agents will normally be stopped 72 to 96 hours prior to the procedure to minimize the potential for any bleeding problems. You will need to contact your referring clinician prior to stopping these medications to insure that is safe for you. If you cannot stop these medications, then a spine injection may not be the best procedure for you.
- Bring any prior imaging studies such as x-rays, MRI or CT scans with you. The WIS radiologist will review these studies to make certain that the procedure is safe for you and to determine the exact location for the injection.
- Bring a list of your medications and allergies with you.
- If you are ill or taking antibiotics, please call us and we will gladly reschedule your procedure. A spine injection should not be performed on patients within a week of taking antibiotics.



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- Notify us if you have had dental work within the prior week as this would increase your risk of getting an infection.
- Wear comfortable clothing and please leave all valuables at home.

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## What Should I Expect during the Procedure?

Here's what will to expect during your image-guided pain management injection:

- A WIS patient services representative will first obtain a medical history and answer any questions you may still have.
- The radiologist who is going to do the injection will review an “Informed Consent” form for the procedure with you and answer any remaining questions or concerns that you may have.
- You will then be positioned on the fluoroscopy or CT system procedure table.
- The technologist will sterilize the region that will be treated.
- You will be awake for the procedure. In some circumstances, you may receive conscious sedation.
- The technologist will obtain several images to assist in precise needle placement.
- During your injection a small volume of contrast media may be injected to confirm the location of the needle.
- After the needle location is confirmed, medication will be injected. You may feel pressure during the injection, but most procedures are relatively painless.
- Typically, you will be in the procedure suite for 20-30 minutes.

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## What Should I Expect after the Procedure?

You will be observed after the procedure until it is determined that it is safe for you to leave. Typically, the entire time you will need for this procedure is 1-2 hours. It is imperative that you have a driver take you home if you have received any sedation. After the procedure, please follow these instructions:

- Rest at home for 24 hours.
- Refrain from any strenuous activity or impact exercise for 48 hours .
- Do not take aspirin products for 48 hours.
- Do not apply any direct heat to the injection site for 48 hours, including sitting in a hot tub, a hot bath or applying a heating pad. A shower is okay, as is ice.

Very rarely, you may have a reaction to the steroid that was injected (steroid flare). These symptoms are temporary and rarely last longer than 24-48 hours. They include facial flushing, headache, an increase in pain levels, difficulty sleeping and/or a rapid heart rate.

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## How Soon Will My Doctor Get a Report of the Procedure?

Your referring clinician will receive a written report from WIS within 24 hours of your procedure. Please follow-up with them so he or she can discuss the report with you.

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## **Are the Steroids Used for the Injection Safe?**

The steroids used in the treatment are potent therapeutic anti-inflammatory agents. These steroids are not the same drugs that have been abused by athletes.

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