INTERCOSTAL BLOCK

Description of Procedure:

An intercostal block is an injection along the ribcage into or around the small muscles and nerves between each of your ribs. We can inject these areas to get the muscle(s) or nerves to relax by decreasing inflammation with the steroid and bringing initial comfort with the numbing medicine.

Before Your Injection/Procedure:

1. You will need a driver to bring you and wait for the duration of your stay here at the Pain Center. You need a driver due to the anesthetic medication used in the injection and not due to sedation.

2. If you are having IV sedation for your procedure you are allowed to have solid foods (this includes milk and soup) as long as you finish eating 8 hours before your procedure. This means you can have a full breakfast at 6 am if you have a procedure at 2:00 pm. You can also have clear liquids (including jell-o, soda, water, certain clear juices like apple, cranberry grape and other without pulp – no orange or tomato juice) as long as you finish these 2 hours before your procedure. This means that you can have black coffee, jell-o or a glass of water at 12:25 pm before your 2:30 pm procedure.

3. You should take all your morning medicine (except diabetic medicine, if you are having IV sedation) with a sip of water. We ask that you bring an up-to-date, current list of your medicines every time you come for a procedure or office visit. This is due to the fact many of our patients have multiple doctors and often have their medicines change.

4. Please notify us if you are pregnant, allergic to contrast dye, or iodine.

5. It is not necessary for you to stop taking blood thinners for this procedure. (coumadin, plavix, aggrenox, etc.) However, you should still remind the nursing staff it is part of your regular medication regimen since we may schedule you for a procedure that does require you to stop.
6. We usually have you completely undress for most procedures (except cervical) down to your socks. Although not necessary to remove your jewelry, it may be best to leave valuables at home.

During Your Injection/Procedure:

1. Your skin will be cleaned with betadine. If you have an allergy to this we will use hibiclens. Generally, these injections are not done under fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance but sometimes may still be used.

2. Depending on the physician, you may be marked with a skin marker at the point of inflammation. You may or may not be asked to point out where exactly the pain is located. You may have more than one injection site for this procedure.

3. If having IV sedation, the tech or nurse will monitor your vital signs for the duration of the procedure.

4. This procedure lasts approximately 2-3 minutes and your family member or driver will wait in the waiting room.

Following Your Injection/Procedure:

1. Pain relief may not be immediate. If pain relief is immediate, it may return within several hours. Sometimes, the pain becomes worse for the next day or two following the procedure. You are expected to recall the duration and effectiveness of the pain relief during and immediately after the procedure.

2. We will keep you in recovery until you are stable. Usually 15 minutes for patient's not receiving IV sedation and 30 minutes for those who do.

3. You will be offered something to drink as well as crackers and we will bring your driver or family member back to you in recovery.

4. Your vital signs will be monitored by the nursing staff and we will also make your next appointment for you before you leave.

5. **When you first begin to walk, it is important that you ask the nurse for assistance.**

6. You may not drive; operate heavy machinery or power tools for at least 8 hours after your injection.

7. You may resume your normal medications (except blood thinners-be sure to check with your nurse regarding when and if you may restart these medicines.) You may want to take it easy for the day of your injection, however normal everyday activity is encouraged for the days following.

You may notice your pain increase in the next day or two following the procedure. This is normal. Minimal drainage from the injection site or sites is also expected. However, if this continues for more then a couple days or drainage increases and begins to change color, notify
your pain care physician ((417)820-2064 or toll free (877)234-2524.) If you experience pain at
the injection site, apply ice first until numb then alternate with heat. You may receive an
appointment to have another injection or an office visit. If you have any questions at this time,
don’t hesitate to ask.