OCCIPITAL NERVE BLOCK

Description of Procedure:

The occipital nerve supplies the back of the head with sensation. Injection of local anesthetic and steroid is performed to relieve symptoms of headache or nerve pain from the occipital nerve.

Before Your Injection/Procedure:

1. You need a driver if you have 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, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO NOTIFY US IF YOU ARE OR HAVE BEEN TAKING BLOOD THINNERS!! Because for most procedures we will have you stop these medicines.

6. Although not necessary to remove your jewelry, it may be best to leave valuables at home.

7. Please be aware that if you are a Diabetic the use of steroids will elevate your blood sugar, so close monitoring of your glucose by you and your PCP is recommended. If you are on Insulin, it is recommended to contact your PCP prior to the procedure for any adjustments in your Insulin dosing.
During Your Injection/Procedure:

1. Your procedure will be performed either in the procedure room or holding room.

2. The physician may mark the injection site with a skin marker before beginning the procedure.

3. If you are having IV sedation, the nurse at the head of the bed will apply monitoring equipment and begin sedation.

4. You will be sitting or laying face down for the injection.

5. After cleansing your skin, a small needle will be used to inject medicine around the nerve in your head and/or your upper neck.

6. This procedure lasts approximately 5-10 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 than a couple days or drainage increases and begins to change color, notify your pain care physician.
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.