

Lumbar Sympathetic Block

This procedure relieves leg pain from Complex Regional Pain Syndromes, which may appear after an injury to a joint or limb. Usually a series of these injections is needed to treat the problem. Patients who are on blood thinning medications or who have an infection near the injections site should not receive the block.

STEP 1

Patients lie either on their side or stomach on a table equipped with a fluoroscopic x-ray unit. An intravenous (IV) line is started to administer medication to relax the patient. A local anesthetic numbs the skin and all the tissue down to the sympathetic nerves.

STEP 2

The physician slides a needle through the anesthetized track. A contrast solution is injected so the physician can use an x-ray to see the painful areas and to confirm the location of the needle tip.

STEP 3

A mixture of anesthetic, saline and anti-inflammatory medicine is injected around the sympathetic nerves to block pain signals from reaching the brain.

END OF PROCEDURE

The legs may feel weak or numb for a few hours after the procedure. Then, pain from the legs should improve. More blocks may be repeated about once a week until the pain subsides.

