

Trigeminal Nerve Block

Why use this treatment?

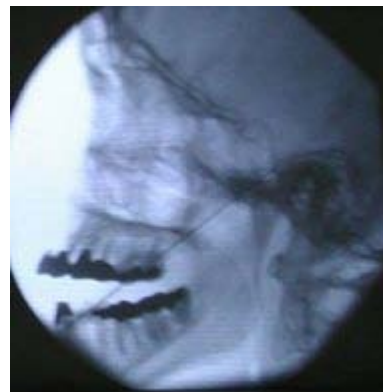
This procedure is used for trigeminal neuralgia, described by many patients as one of the most painful afflictions known. TN sufferers experience sudden attacks of pain that are typically brief, but severe. TN pain occurs on only one side, involving the upper, middle and/or lower portions of the face. Attacks may come on without warning or be triggered by specific light stimulation in the affected area of the face. Common triggers include touch, talking, eating, drinking, chewing, tooth brushing, hair combing, water from a shower and even kissing. There are a number of causes for trigeminal neuralgia, including pressure from blood vessels on the trigeminal nerve, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, or injury to the nerve from head trauma, dental or sinus trauma or from failed procedures that were intended to treat the neuralgia. TN pain after traumatic injury is usually constant aching or burning, but can also get worse with exposure to wind or cold.

How does a trigeminal nerve block work?

A trigeminal nerve block delivers steroids and/or local anesthetic directly into the space around the trigeminal nerve root. The area is bathed in the medicine. The injection is given to reduce inflammation and provide pain relief for several days to several months.

How is the procedure done?

You will be placed on an x-ray table and your skin will be cleansed and prepared. This procedure is performed under local anesthetic with light IV sedation. A needle is inserted into the skin beside the mouth, and directed through an opening at the base of the skull. A harmless dye may be injected to confirm the needle is in the precise location, as seen on an x-ray. Medication is then injected into the space surrounding the trigeminal nerve root.



What are the risks?

This procedure is safe. However, with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and the possibility of complications. The most common side effect is increased pain - which is temporary. Other risks involve bleeding, infection, spinal block, epidural block, and injection into blood vessels. While extremely rare, as with any invasive procedure, the risks of paralysis and death are possible.

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After your procedure:

Immediately after the injection, you may notice that your pain may be gone or considerably less. This is due to the effect of the local anesthetic and may last only for a few hours. Your pain may return and you may have some soreness at the injection site for several days. You may notice some pain relief immediately, but it may take up to 14 days to receive the full effect of the injection.

You were given a number of medications during your procedure, including sedatives, steroid medication, and local anesthetic. Any of these medications can sometimes cause temporary drowsiness, forgetfulness, numbness, weakness or soreness. For your safety, it is important that you:

- Rest for a few hours after the procedure. Walk with assistance as long as you are having any numbness, weakness or drowsiness.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery or power tools for at least 12 hours.
- Do not make any important decisions for 12–24 hours after the procedure.
- Resume your regular activity slowly. Do not overdo!
- You may eat your regular diet.
- Take your regular medication. If you are diabetic, contact your family doctor if your blood sugar readings are higher than usual.
- Use ice packs at the injection site for the next 24 hours. Don't leave the ice on for longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- Use heat only according to the instructions that you were given.

Notify us if:

- There is a major change in pain level or if your pain pattern is different. Remember, your pain may be much better immediately after the injection, but it will be at least two days before you notice significant pain relief.
- You develop chills or a fever over 101⁰F in the next 3 days.
- There is any abnormal bleeding or drainage from the injection site.
- Please call the office during business hours whenever possible.
- You can reach the answering service at (616) 776-9643 after the office is closed.
- Report to the nearest emergency room if you are unable to contact Javery Pain Institute.

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Patient Signature

Date

Clinical Witness

Date