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PATIENT GUIDE FOR SPINE PROCEDURES

You have been scheduled for a spinal injection procedure. Your physician has informed you of the type of procedure you are scheduled to have.

INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO INJECTION

We may need to obtain medical clearance from your primary care physician, cardiologist, and /or specialist.

In many cases this will require blood work within 1 week of the procedure, and a recent EKG (3-6 months).

A pre-procedure appointment to go over the procedure itself and the post-procedure instructions is required.

- DO NOT take any anti-inflammatory medications or aspirin for 5 days prior to your procedure. (Includes Aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Celebrex, Diclofenac, Meloxicam).

If you are taking blood thinners like Aspirin, Plavix, Xarelto, Eliquis, or Savaysa for cardiovascular conditions, you must first consult with your prescribing physician to stop them before the procedure. In general, we follow these guidelines:

- Plavix® – Stop for 7 days prior to appointment (you will need clearance from your cardiologist if you have cardiac stents in place).
 - Coumadin® – Stop 5 days prior to appointment with an INR drawn the day before your appointment.
 - Aggrenox® – Stop 7 days prior to appointment.
 - Lovenox® – Stop 24 hours prior to appointment.
 - Xarelto® – Stop 3 days prior to appointment.
- Nothing to eat or drink 8 hours prior to your scheduled arrival time.
 - If you are diabetic: if you are on insulin, please ask your endocrinologist for specific instructions about taking insulin the night before and/or the morning of surgery. You will probably be advised to lower the dose since you will not be able to eat breakfast.

- If you take other medications (pills) for diabetes, it is usually best to take your evening dose the night before surgery, but skip the morning dose on the day of surgery.
- It is necessary to have an adult stay with you and drive you home after the procedure.
- If you have mitral valve prolapse or normally take antibiotics prior to procedures, please notify your physician

AT HOME, AFTER YOUR EPIDURAL INJECTION

Immediately after the injection, you may feel that your pain is gone or is much less. This pain relief is often from the local anesthetic and will usually only last a few hours, followed by return of your usual pain. Pain relief from the steroid medication may take up to 2 weeks to appear.

PAIN MEDICATION:

- You may experience mild pain at the site of injection for several days. You may also experience a temporary increase in your usual pain after the injection.
- You can apply ice to the area for as long as 15 minutes, 3 – 4 times a day for localized pain.
- Do not use heat the day of the procedure.
- For minor discomfort, Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol, not in excess of two tablets four times per day, may be used. Do not use non-steroidal anti-inflammatories for 1 week after the injection.
- Medication prescribed by your physician may be taken as directed for discomfort not relieved by non-prescription medication.

ACTIVITY / DIET:

- You may be up and around as tolerated by your level of comfort; however, plan to take it easy the remainder of today.
- You may eat and drink as you desire.
- Do not drive for the remainder of the day.
- Do not take a tub bath or soak in water (i.e. pool, hot tub) for 5 days after the procedure.
- Please allow 3 days post-procedure before resuming physical therapy.

RARE POST-PROCEDURAL SYMPTOMS

You should be alert to report any signs of infection. You should call us immediately if any of the following occur:

- If you experience any swelling, redness, bleeding or discharge from the site of the injection.
- If you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If you experience new or worsening back or neck pain.
- If you experience a new numbness or weakness in your arms or legs.

- If you experience new difficulty with urination after the injection, like difficulty urinating or suddenly losing control of your bladder.
- If you experience new difficulty with your bowel movements after the injection, like suddenly losing control of your bowels.

Should you develop a headache, stay quiet with your head and body flat, drink plenty of fluids, and take Tylenol for the headache. If your headache persists beyond 12 hours or is noticeably increased by standing upright, it may be an indication of a spinal fluid leak and our office should be notified. Usually, in this event, the symptoms are self-limiting and resolve in time without additional treatment.

If you have diabetes and regularly check your own blood sugar, you should check your blood sugar more often during the first several days after an epidural steroid injection. The injection may cause your blood sugar to be elevated transiently for a period of 72 hours. Please talk with the doctor who helps to manage your diabetes for instructions in how to change your diet and/or diabetes medication if your blood sugar is elevated.

FOLLOW UP: 2-3 Weeks after the injection or earlier if you are having any urgent issues.

Call 916-732-3000 if any worsening of pain, swelling, redness, fever, or other signs of infection. Seek urgent medical care if staff unavailable.