



Ganglion Impar Block

What is a ganglion impar block?

A ganglion impar block is a procedure performed to help relieve chronic pain in the tailbone (called coccygodynia), pelvis or anorectal area. Coccygodynia can arise due to trauma to the tailbone such as a fall on the bottom or with pressure during pregnancy or childbirth. The ganglion of impar is a network of nerves that are located just anterior to the tailbone and supplies some of the function and sensation to the anorectal region and tailbone. Your pain management doctor can evaluate your symptoms and decide if this procedure may be right for you.

How is the procedure performed?

A ganglion impar block is done as a quick outpatient procedure, typically in an ambulatory surgery center using x-ray, otherwise known as fluoroscopy. You will be positioned lying on your stomach with blankets covering you while the area just surrounding the tailbone is cleaned an aseptic solution. Your physician will identify the location of the tailbone and ganglion of impar using fluoroscopy. Once the anatomy is visualized, your physician will inject a small amount of local anesthetic to numb the skin at the entry point. Once numb, your physician will direct a small needle to the ganglion impar which is located just in front of the tailbone. Typically, a dye is then injected so that it can be seen spreading to the correct location on fluoroscopy. Finally, a solution of local anesthetic alone or mixed with steroid is injected through this same needle. The procedure generally takes less than 10 minutes.

How effective is a ganglion impar block?

Often the area injected is numb immediately after the procedure but typically it takes several days for the full effect to take place. The block can bring about full relief of coccydynia or rectal pain after one injection, other times the it may take several repeated injections for full relief. Sometimes the procedure provides long term relief but even if it only lasts a short time, the fact that it helped still provides your physician with diagnostic information he or she can use for future treatments.

What risks are involved with a ganglion impar block?

A ganglion impar block is a very low risk procedure typically followed with mild soreness at the site for the first 24 hours. Risks can include increased pain, bleeding or hematomas, and perforation of the bowel. However, using safe techniques that include direct visualization with fluoroscopy makes a potential complication exceedingly rare.

What happens after a ganglion impar block?

Do not perform any vigorous activity for 12-24 hours after the procedure. Your physician may also recommend that you not drive for a certain period of time after the procedure. You can return to normal activities the following day. You will be able to resume your normal diet and medications. Your physician will schedule your follow up appointment.

Is a ganglion impar block right for me?

If you have chronic tailbone pain, pelvic or rectal pain, a ganglion impar block may benefit you. Talk to your physician about your symptoms and he/she will help decide what is right for you.