



Sphenopalatine Ganglion Block

What is a Sphenopalatine Ganglion block?

A Sphenopalatine Ganglion block is an injection of medication that helps relieve facial pain. It's used to treat:

- Cluster Headache
- Chronic Migraines
- Other atypical facial pain syndromes

Sphenopalatine Ganglion is a group of nerve cells located deep in the face behind the nose. Many head and face nerves also pass through this area. Blocking these nerves can help you stop feeling facial pain and headache.

How is a Sphenopalatine Ganglion block done?

First, you'll be given an intravenous medication to relax you. Then, you'll lie on your back on an x-ray table. The doctor will insert a thin needle into the side of your face and inject anesthetic. Then, with x-ray guidance, he or she will insert a second needle and inject a steroid pain medication. Usually, the procedure takes less than 30 minutes, and you can go home the same day.

How effective is a Sphenopalatine Ganglion block?

Some patients report pain relief immediately after the injection, but the pain may return a few hours later as the anesthetic wears off. Longer term relief usually begins in two to three days, once the steroid begins to work. How long the pain relief last is different for each patient. Some may be pain-free for days or weeks. Usually people need a series of injections to continue the pain relief. Sometimes it takes only two injections; sometimes it takes more than 10. The relief tends to last longer with each treatment.

What are the risks?

The risk of complication from a Sphenopalatine Ganglion block is very low. However, there could be bruising, swelling or soreness at the injection site. Serious complications, including infection, bleeding and nerve damage, are uncommon.

Side effects of the procedure include:

- Fainting
- Nose Bleed
- Numbness in your face

These effects will subside in a few hours.

What happens after the procedure?

Some people may experience an unpleasant taste in their mouth and a temporary numbness in the throat. It is ok to eat and drink carefully after the procedure as the throat may feel numb temporarily. Do not drive or do any rigorous activity for 24 hours after your Sphenopalatine Ganglion block. Take it easy. You can return to your normal activities the next day. Your physician will schedule your follow up appointment.

Is a Sphenopalatine Ganglion block right for you?

A Sphenopalatine Ganglion block may be right for you if you have facial pain that does not respond to other treatments. Talk to your physician about your symptoms and he/she will help decide what is right for you.