

Lumbar Injections (ESI, TFESI, SI Joint, MBB, RFA)

Patient post-operative instructions

Typical hospital course

Most patients go home the same day.

Key limits / reminders

No lifting more than 10 pounds, and avoid repetitive bending, twisting, or impact activity for the first 1 week.

Before surgery

- Your physician will review whether you are having an epidural steroid injection, transforaminal epidural steroid injection, sacroiliac joint injection, or medial branch block.
- You will receive medication and arrival instructions at your pre-procedure visit.

After surgery

- Back soreness and muscle spasm are common early after the procedure.
- If several levels are treated, you may be more sore.
- Steroid benefit may begin in several days, while diagnostic injections may wear off the same day.
- Pain relief may begin gradually over several weeks to months.
- Walking is expected soon after surgery, often the same day or the next morning.

Incision and showering

- Keep the dressing clean and dry. Call if it becomes soaked, peels off, or you are not sure how to change it.
- Showering is allowed if the dressing and incision stay dry. No soaking until cleared.

Activity

- Walking is encouraged immediately. Increase distance gradually.
- Limit strenuous activity the day of the injection.
- Resume normal activities the following day as tolerated unless instructed otherwise.

Medications, driving, and work

- Resume routine medications unless instructed otherwise.
- Steroid injections may temporarily increase blood sugar. Monitor closely if you have diabetes.
- Do not drive the day of the procedure if sedation was used.

Follow-up

- Typical follow-up is around 2 weeks and 6 weeks, with additional visits if needed.
- Track percent pain relief, duration of relief, and functional improvement to review at follow-up.

Constipation

- Opioid pain medication commonly causes constipation. Start a stool softener and/or gentle laxative if needed, drink fluids, and stop these medicines if you develop loose stools or diarrhea.
- If you go several days without a bowel movement despite over-the-counter treatment, call the office.

Smoking / nicotine

- Avoid smoking and nicotine while you are healing. It can increase the risk of wound problems and slow recovery.

Call right away for

- Increasing pain that is not controlled with the prescribed medication plan.
- New or worsening weakness, numbness, tingling, loss of balance, or new trouble using your arms or legs.
- Redness, swelling, warmth, drainage, or a bad smell from the incision.
- Fever of 101 F or higher.
- Inability to urinate, loss of bowel or bladder control, or new saddle numbness.
- New calf pain or swelling, chest pain, coughing up blood, or shortness of breath.

Questions or concerns: call the office. For chest pain, severe shortness of breath, or another emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.