

Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection (CESI)

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What is a CESI?

CESIs are injections of corticosteroids and/or local anesthetics into the epidural space of the spinal canal. This space is located one layer superficial to the space containing the spinal fluid. Under guidance of an x-ray machine (fluoroscopy), the needle is placed in the epidural space and the medication is injected. The choice of medication will depend on the reason for the injection. If the procedure is being performed for diagnostic reasons, as if to see if another procedure would be helpful, a local anesthetic only will be injected. If the procedure is to decrease known inflammation a corticosteroid and local anesthetic will be injected.

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Why am I getting an CESI?

CESI injections are recommended for patients for a number of conditions.

These conditions include, but are not limited to:

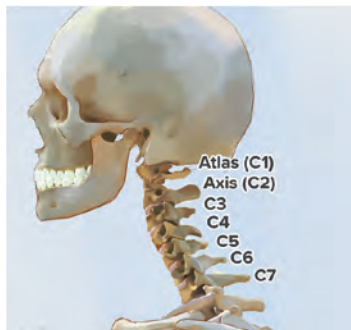
- Herniated discs
- Protruding discs
- Degenerated discs
- Osteoarthritis of the spine
- Spinal Stenosis
- Scar tissue or other changes after neck surgery

Symptoms from these conditions can include numbness, tingling, or pain in the upper extremities. A CESI should help to lower the inflammation caused by these conditions therefore decreasing the symptoms.

Anatomy

The cervical spine includes 7 vertebrae: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, and C7. The 1st and 2nd cervical vertebrae are special in their shape and function. They are known as the Atlas (C1) and Axis (C2). In between each vertebrae, starting at C2-C3, is a disc that sits on the body of the vertebrae.

These discs provide cushion and allow for movement between the vertebrae. The spinal cord runs through an opening of the vertebrae called the spinal canal. The spinal cord branches off into nerve roots that pass through an opening on either side of the spine.



Complications

As with any procedure, complications can occur, although they are rare. Of these complications, the most common would be a temporary increase of pain near the injection site. If this occurs, apply ice to the area on the day of the procedure. If the pain persists, apply moist heat to the area. Another complication that can occur but that is rare is a headache.

Serious complications are very uncommon but may include bleeding, infection, or nerve damage. If pain continues to increase, contact your doctor. If you experience severe pain, fever, redness, or swelling around the injection site, have someone take you to the nearest emergency room to be evaluated for possible procedure complications or infection.

Expectations

The relief given by local anesthetics will wear off in several hours after the procedure. The duration of relief from the steroid varies from person to person. Expect to return to normal activities and work the day after the procedure.

