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Occipital Nerve Block

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What is an occipital nerve block?

An occipital nerve block is a procedure done by injecting a local anesthetic and sometimes a steroid medication around the occipital nerve (a nerve that runs from the upper neck to the back of the head).

Why would I need an occipital nerve block?

Your doctor might recommend doing an occipital nerve block to relieve some types of headaches.

How do I prepare for an occipital nerve block?

- On the day of the occipital nerve block, you can have a light meal up to four hours before the scheduled procedure time. You should stop drinking anything for two hours before the procedure.
- Inform your doctor about your medical history, especially if you have diabetes or hypertension.
- Make sure to inform your doctor about the medications you are taking, especially blood thinners, and any type of allergy you have.
- Be at the Medical Center at least 15 minutes before the scheduled procedure time.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form that gives your doctor permission to perform the procedure.

You may not be able to perform an occipital nerve block if you:

- Have a bleeding disorder
- Have an allergy to any of the injected medications
- Have an active infection
- Have uncontrolled blood sugar levels
- Are pregnant

How is an occipital nerve block done?

- Occipital nerve block is done at your doctor's clinic.
- You will be asked to sit or lie down on your stomach. The injection site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution.
- The doctor will inject the medications with a thin needle near the occipital nerve on the back of your head just above the neck.
- The procedure takes only a few minutes.

What happens after an occipital nerve block?

- After the procedure, you can go home and resume your daily activities as usual.
- You may feel pain or soreness at the injection site for up to two days. You may apply cold packs to the injection site to reduce discomfort. You may also take painkillers as prescribed by your doctor to relieve the pain.
- Your headache will generally improve in three to five days. The pain relief effect may last from a few days to several months. If the pain does not improve or resolve after one week, you may receive a second injection.

When should I contact my doctor?

Contact your doctor if you have:

- Persistent pain
- Fever and chills
- Swelling, redness, or bleeding at the injection site
- Dizziness
- Ringing in ears
- Metallic taste in the mouth

For any questions or concerns, please contact your nurse on 01 - 350000 ext..... or your doctor at We are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am till 5:00 pm. We are here to answer all your questions.

This educational material provides general information only. It does not constitute medical advice. Consult your health care provider to determine whether the information applies to you.