

Nerve Blocks

What are nerve blocks?

- Nerve blocks are injections of a numbing substance (lidocaine 1%) around a nerve. The injection is done using ultrasound guidance to ensure safety and accuracy.
- Nerve blocks are used for both acute and chronic pain conditions. These injections can provide relief for several week to months. However in some cases, releasing nerves that are trapped by surrounding soft tissues can lead to permanent improvements such as in carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Sometimes, nerve blocks are used for diagnostic purposes to determine where your pain is coming from. In this case, relief will only last hours but will help guide the next step in the treatment plan.
- Nerve blocks can be used in isolation, or in combination with other therapies like trigger point injections, medical Botox, rehabilitation or pharmaceutical medications.
- Please note: Dr. Thompson does not provide epidurals, medial branch blocks, facet injection or lumbar/cervical nerve root blocks. He does offer lateral branch blocks for SI joint pain.

What conditions will nerve blocks help?

- Migraine & other headache
- PTSD (superficial cervical plexus block)
- Muscular pain (with TPI)
- Pain post-knee replacement
- Nerve entrapments
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Cubital tunnel syndrome
- Concussion
- Low back / SI joint pain and dysfunction

What to expect after treatment?

- There may be some post-treatment numbness and weakness but this does not usually last more than two hours.
- Rarely, injections will cause a flare up of pain for a few days. This is unusual and should resolve spontaneously.

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How can I treat post-procedure pain?

- Tylenol (acetaminophen) or NSAIDs (ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.).
- Icing injection sites, proper hydration and progressive range of motion exercises are also effective to speed recovery.

What should I avoid after treatment?

- Avoid touching the injection sites unnecessarily, this can increase infection risk.
- No manual therapy including massage, chiropractic treatment for 3-5 days.

How many treatments will I need?

- Each patient is different, with a different condition and degree of pain.
- Some only need one treatment, others might need ongoing treatment as they gradually progress.

What are the risks?

- *Infection*: is a very rare but potentially serious complication. If you have red, hot, swollen skin around injection sites please contact our office immediately.
 - If you develop these symptoms with fever, sweats, chills, or other flu-like symptoms, go to the closest emergency department
- *Lightheadedness or nausea* are rare and generally resolve rapidly
- Brief post-treatment numbness and weakness from the process of injection
- A temporary increase in pain is uncommon but can occur

When should I rebook?

- Each patient is different, with different recovery times and acuity of pain.
- We suggest repeating nerve blocks no more frequently than every 2 weeks, however this is very patient specific.

How can I improve my chances of long-term benefit?

- Ensure you are participating in rehab, even if that is at-home physiotherapy consisting of rolling and stretching. If you need a rehab practitioner recommendation, please ask. While your body heals, we want to make sure your biomechanics are sound to promote long-term results.