



## Nerve Block Treatments

Sympathetic nerves are a part of the autonomic nervous system along with other parts such as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. These make up the central and peripheral nervous system. The function of the sympathetic nerves is to control both conscious and unconscious bodily functions like blood pressure, breathing, heart rate, and digestion.

Pain response is typically not a function of the sympathetic nerves unless there is an unusual circumstance from a nervous system disorder like complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). When this occurs, it is likely for a medical practitioner to administer nerve block treatments for help with the problem.

Nerve block treatments, or nerve blocks, can be used by a patient's doctor if other treatments are not effective. Nerve block treatments can also be used as a first line of treatment, although sometimes a physician might suggest trying other treatments beforehand like anti-inflammatory medications or physical therapy and rest.



### Nerve Block Treatments for CRPS

Nerve block treatments are given with the patient lying on an x-ray table for an intravenous (IV) injection. If the patient is nervous about the nerve block treatments procedure, the doctor can administer medication to help the patient relax. This would usually be a one time administration of a sedative on the day of the nerve block treatments.

The area of the skin being injected is sanitized before the injection and anesthesia is also applied to the area for the patient's comfort. The doctor will use an x-ray to help guide the needle to the target area for the injection. Nerve block treatments are administered slowly to help avoid any problems and further discomfort to the patient. Nerve block treatments are a quick process and usually take about 30 minutes to complete.

### Types of Nerve Block Treatments

There are various areas of the body that can require nerve block treatments. There are also different types of nerve block treatments. The type of nerve block treatments that a patient will receive depends on the area of the patient's body being affected.

#### Some types of nerve block treatments:

- Brachial plexus nerve block. A brachial plexus nerve block involves areas such as the shoulder, arm, elbow, hand, and wrist
- Cervical nerve block. A cervical plexus nerve block involves the shoulder and upper neck region, but can also refer to regions of the back such as the thoracic and lumbar regions of the spine
- Ophthalmic nerve block. Ophthalmic nerve block refers to the eyelids and scalp
- Maxillary nerve block. A maxillary nerve block is a nerve block treatment for the upper jaw
- Sphenopalatine nerve block. Sphenopalatine refers to the nose and palate areas of a patient's face
- Supraorbital nerve block. A supraorbital nerve block is a nerve block treatment for the forehead

### Recovery from Nerve Block Treatments

Any degree of pain and pain relief depends on whether the patient's pain is actually being caused by a problem with their sympathetic nerves. Often times, it is recommended that the patient maintain a "pain diary" to better assess the effectiveness of the nerve block treatments. After a week or so, the patient can consult with the doctor again to assess their medical situation since the nerve block treatments might not be effective. The doctor will also assess whether the diagnosis is correct based on the outcome of the nerve block treatments.

Patients can resume taking their regular medications after the nerve block treatments are completed. However, doctors may advise limiting the use of pain medications to the day of the nerve block treatments. This is also to help assess whether the diagnosis and treatment is correct. It is normal for the patient to experience some mild pain around the site of injection.

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**Sources:**

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