

Celiac Plexus Block

You are scheduled for a CT-guided celiac plexus block. Here is some information to keep in mind before, during, and after the procedure.

What is the celiac plexus?

The celiac plexus is a bundle of nerves located deep in your belly (abdomen). It is also called the solar plexus.

What is a celiac plexus block?

In patients with certain diseases, the celiac plexus may be partly responsible for sending pain signals to your brain. This can cause you to feel pain in your belly.

A celiac plexus block is a medical procedure in which an injection of medicine blocks the nerves in the celiac plexus from sending pain signals. Blocking these nerves can help reduce pain.

How to prepare for a celiac plexus block

30 days before the procedure:

- You will need to have a history and physical no more than 30 days before the celiac plexus block.
- If you are allergic to IV contrast-dye that enhances the images produced by the CT—please tell your doctor. He or she will give you medicine that will allow you to receive IV contrast dye safely. Your doctor will ask you to take these medicines before the procedure and on the day of the procedure.

One week before the procedure:

- You may need to stop taking certain pain relieving medicines or blood thinners 1 week before your celiac plexus block. Examples of these are: aspirin, Plavix, Lovenox, ibuprofen (such as Motrin or Advil), Coumadin, and Effient. Talk to your doctor about if and when you need to stop taking these medicines.

- You will have your blood drawn for a complete blood count, an acute care panel, and coagulation (blood clotting) studies within 1 week of the procedure.

The night before the procedure:

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight on the day of this procedure. For example, if your procedure is on a Wednesday, do not eat or drink anything after midnight on Tuesday night.

The day of the procedure

- Ask your doctor if you should take your regular medicines with only a sip of water (NO food) the day of the procedure. Necessary medications may include blood pressure, heart, or pain medicines.
- You will need to make arrangements for a ride home after your celiac plexus block. You will not be able to drive for 24 hours after the procedure.

After the procedure

- If you take medicine for diabetes that contains Metformin, you may be asked to stop taking it for 2 days after the procedure. Your kidney function may be checked by your doctor before you start taking Metformin again. Your doctor will talk with you about whether you should take diabetes medicines the day of the procedure.

What will happen during a celiac plexus block?

- A celiac plexus block usually takes about 1 hour or less to perform. You will be awake during the procedure. Your doctor may talk with you during the procedure.
- When you arrive at the clinic, a radiologist and anesthesiologist will discuss the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have. After talking with you, they will ask you to sign a consent form giving permission for the procedure. Once you have given your permission, you will change into a hospital gown.
- A nurse will insert an intravenous (IV) catheter, which is a small tube, into a vein in your arm or hand. The nurse will use the IV catheter to give you fluids during the procedure. The nurse may also use the IV catheter to give you pain medicines or medicines to help you relax (sedation). She or he will monitor your heart, blood pressure, and oxygen level throughout the procedure.
- During the procedure, you will be positioned on the table on your stomach. A nurse or radiology technologist will use soap to clean the area where the medicine will be injected. Then you will be partly covered with towels and sheets. You will be asked to lie still during the procedure. If you need help, the nurse will be available to help you.
- A radiologist and anesthesiologist will place 1 or 2 needles on either side of your spine

after numbing the area with local anesthetic. They will use a CT and a small amount of contrast dye to guide the placement of these needles. A CT uses x-rays and advanced computer programs to draw detailed pictures of the inside of your body. They may also use an ultrasound to guide the placement of the needles. An ultrasound uses sound waves to create pictures of the inside of your body.

- Once the needle has been placed, the radiologist will inject medicine through the needle to numb or destroy the nerves that are causing pain.
 - The medications you received during your procedure include:

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- At the end of the procedure, the radiologist will remove the needle. He or she will press on the area where the needle was placed for a few seconds. Then, he or she will apply a small bandage where the needle was placed.

What happens after the procedure?

- You will be taken to your hospital room or the Day Hospital on a stretcher.
- If you received medication to help you relax, or sedation, you may feel drowsy or sleepy for a few hours after the procedure.
- You will be required to stay in the hospital bed for approximately 1-2 hours. You may get up to use the bathroom with permission and help from your nurse.
- Your nurse will check the site of the injection frequently for bleeding, swelling, or pain. If you notice bleeding or a change in pain, let your nurse know.
- Your nurse will also check your blood pressure while you lay flat, sit at the edge of the bed, and stand. This will be repeated every hour as needed after the procedure.

What should I do when I get home?

- Rest for the remainder of the day. Then, take it easy for at least 3 days unless your clinic staff or unit staff tells you otherwise.
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids to clear the contrast dye from your body.
- Slowly resume your regular diet, unless the clinic staff tells you otherwise.
- You may shower and remove the bandages 12 hours after the procedure.
- Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, make any legal/important decisions, or consume alcoholic beverages for at least 1 day after the procedure.

Ask your physician when it is OK to start taking aspirin, ibuprofen (such as Motrin or Advil), and other pain medicines or blood thinners.

Are there risks?

As with all medical procedures, there are risks involved in having a celiac plexus block, and complications sometimes happen. Complications include:

- Low blood pressure when you sit up or stand up
- Diarrhea
- A backache
- Infection
- Very rarely, damage to your kidneys or lungs may occur

Special Instructions

Call your clinic doctor right away if you have any of the following symptoms for up to 3 days after your celiac plexus block:

- A fever higher than 101.0 F (38.5 C), or a temperature directed by clinic staff
- Increased redness, bleeding, or swelling at the procedure site
- Weakness or numbness in your arms or legs
- Severe pain or pain that gets worse
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Blood in your pee (urine)

For emergencies, call 911 or go to your closest emergency room and bring this sheet with you.

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