Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Celiac Plexus Block Procedure

This information will help you get ready for your celiac plexus block procedure at MSK. It includes what to expect before, during, and after your procedure.

The celiac (solar) plexus is a group of nerves in your abdomen (belly). It sends pain messages to your brain. These pain messages are sent from your:

- Pancreas
- Liver
- Kidneys
- Gall bladder
- Spleen
- Bowels (intestines)

About your celiac plexus block procedure

A celiac plexus block is an injection (shot) of a medicine that stops these nerves from feeling pain. This can help treat pain in your upper abdomen. Your doctor may recommend that you have a celiac plexus block if you:

- Have side effects from common pain medicine.
- Do not get enough pain relief from common pain medicine.

While problems with the celiac plexus block are rare, they may include:

- Injury to major blood vessels, nerves, or your kidneys.
- Partial collapse of your lung.

- Injection of the nerve block medicine into a blood vessel.
- Weakness in your legs.
- Bowel or bladder problems.
- Allergic reactions to medicine or dye used during the procedure.

Your doctor will talk with you about these problems before your procedure.

Before your celiac plexus block procedure

Ask about your medicines

You may need to stop taking some of your usual medicines before your procedure. Or, you may need to take a different dose (amount) than usual. Talk with your healthcare provider about how to take your medicines before your procedure. Do not change how you take your medicines without talking with a healthcare provider.

This section lists some examples of medicines, but there are many others. **Make sure your care team knows all the prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, and dietary supplements you take.** A prescription medicine is one you can only get with a prescription from a healthcare provider. An over-the-counter medicine is one you can buy without a prescription.



It's very important to take your medicines and supplements the right way in the days before your procedure. If you don't, we may need to reschedule your procedure.

Anticoagulants (blood thinners)

A blood thinner is a medicine that changes how your blood clots. Blood thinners are often prescribed to help prevent a heart attack, stroke, or other problems caused by blood clots.

If you take a blood thinner, ask your healthcare provider what to do before your procedure. They may tell you to stop taking it a certain number of days before your procedure. This will depend on the type of procedure you're having and

the reason you're taking a blood thinner.

Here are some examples of blood thinners. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take. **Do not stop taking your blood thinner without talking with a member of your care team.**

- Apixaban (Eliquis®)
- Aspirin
- Celecoxib (Celebrex®)
- Cilostazol (Pletal®)
- Clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)
- Dalteparin (Fragmin®)
- Dipyridamole (Persantine®)
- Edoxaban (Savaysa®)
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox®)
- Fondaparinux (Arixtra®)
- Heparin injection (shot)
- Meloxicam (Mobic®)
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®)
- Pentoxifylline (Trental®)
- Prasugrel (Effient®)
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine®, Sulfazine®)
- Ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
- Tinzaparin (Innohep®)
- Warfarin (Jantoven®, Coumadin®)

Other medicines and supplements can change how your blood clots. Examples include vitamin E, fish oil, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Read *How To Check if a Medicine or Supplement Has Aspirin, Other NSAIDs, Vitamin E, or Fish Oil* (www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement). It will help you know which medicines and supplements you may need to avoid before your procedure.

Diabetes medicines

You may be taking insulin or other diabetes medicines. If so, talk with your MSK healthcare provider and the healthcare provider who prescribes it. Ask them what to do before your surgery or procedure. You may need to stop taking the medicine or take a different dose (amount) than usual. You may also need to follow different eating and drinking instructions before your surgery or procedure. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.

Your care team will check your blood sugar levels during your surgery or procedure.

GLP-1 medicines for weight loss

It's important to tell your healthcare provider if you take a GLP-1 medicine. You must follow special eating and drinking instructions before your surgery or procedure. **It is very important to follow these instructions. If you do not follow them, your surgery or procedure may be delayed or canceled.**

- **Follow a clear liquid diet the day before your surgery or procedure.** Do not eat any solid food. Read *Clear Liquid Diet* (www.mskcc.org/pe/clear-liquid-diet) to learn more.
- **Stop drinking 8 hours before your arrival time.** Do not eat or drink anything after this time, including clear liquids. You can have small sips of water with your medicines.

To learn more, read *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1).

Here are some examples of GLP-1 medicines. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicines you take. Sometimes, these are prescribed to help manage diabetes or other conditions. Other times, they're prescribed for weight loss.

• Semaglutide (Wegovy®, Ozempic®, Rybelsus®) • Dulaglutide (Trulicity®)	• Tirzepatide (Zepbound®, Mounjaro®) • Liraglutide (Saxenda®, Victoza®)

Diuretics (water pills)

A diuretic is a medicine that helps control fluid buildup in your body. Diuretics are often prescribed to help treat hypertension (high blood pressure) or edema (swelling). They can also be prescribed to help treat certain heart or kidney problems.

You may be taking a diuretic. If so, ask the healthcare provider doing your procedure what to do before your procedure. You may need to stop taking it the day of your procedure.

Here are some examples of diuretics. There are others, so be sure your care

team knows all the medicines you take.

• Bumetanide (Bumex®) • Furosemide (Lasix®)	• Hydrochlorothiazide (Microzide®) • Spironolactone (Aldactone®)

Have a blood test before your procedure

Your healthcare provider will schedule you to have a blood test a few days before your procedure. This is to check your platelets (cells that help your blood clot).

Take devices off your skin

You may wear certain devices on your skin. Before your procedure, surgery, or scan, some device makers recommend you take off your:

- Continuous glucose monitor (CGM)
- Insulin pump

Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling your appointment closer to the date you need to change your device. Make sure to bring an extra device with you to put on after your procedure, surgery, or scan.

You may not be sure how to manage your glucose (blood sugar) while your device is off. If so, before your appointment, talk with the healthcare provider who manages your diabetes care.

Arrange for someone to take you home

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. They should be able to contact your care team if they have any concerns. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don't have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They'll send someone to go home with you. There's a charge for this service, and you'll need to provide transportation. It's OK to use a taxi or car service, but you still need a responsible care partner with you.

Agencies in New York
VNS Health: 888-735-8913
Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey
Caring People: 877-227-4649

Tell us if you're sick

If you get sick (including having a fever, cold, sore throat, or flu) before your procedure, call your IR doctor. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

After 5 p.m., during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the Interventional Radiology fellow on call.

Note the time of your appointment

A staff member will call you 2 business days (Monday through Friday) before your procedure. If your procedure is scheduled on a Monday, they'll call you the Thursday before. If you do not get a call by 12 p.m. the business day before your procedure, call 646-677-7001.

The staff member will tell you what time to get to the hospital for your procedure. You'll need to go to:

The Presurgical Center (PSC) at Memorial Hospital
1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065
Take the M elevators to the 2nd floor.

Visit www.msk.org/parking for parking information and directions to all MSK locations.

If you need to cancel your procedure for any reason, call the healthcare provider who scheduled it for you.

The day before your celiac plexus block procedure

Instructions for eating

Important: If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1) instead.



Stop eating at midnight (12 a.m.) the night before your surgery or procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop eating. If so, follow their instructions. Some people need to fast (not eat) for longer before their surgery or procedure.

The day of your celiac plexus block procedure

Instructions for drinking

Important: If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* (www.mskcc.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1) instead.

Between midnight (12 a.m.) and 2 hours before your arrival time, only drink the liquids on the list below. Do not eat or drink anything else. Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.

- Water.
- Clear apple juice, clear grape juice, or clear cranberry juice.

- Gatorade or Powerade.
- Black coffee or plain tea. It's OK to add sugar. Do not add anything else.
    - Do not add any amount of any type of milk or creamer. This includes plant-based milks and creamers.
    - Do not add flavored syrup.

If you have diabetes, pay attention to the amount of sugar in your drinks. It's easier to control your blood sugar levels if you include sugar-free, low-sugar, or no added sugar versions of these drinks.

It's helpful to stay hydrated before surgeries and procedures, so drink if you're thirsty. Do not drink more than you need. You'll get intravenous (IV) fluids during your surgery or procedure.



Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time. This includes water.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop drinking. If so, follow their instructions.

Things to remember

- Take only the medicine your healthcare provider told you to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a few sips of water.
- Do not put on cream or petroleum jelly (Vaseline®). You can use deodorant and light moisturizers.
- Do not wear eye makeup.
- Take off any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave valuable items at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead, if possible. If you do not have glasses, please bring a case for your contacts.

What to bring with you

- ☐ A list of the medicine you take.
- ☐ Medicine for breathing problems (such as inhalers), medicine for chest pain, or both.
- ☐ A case for your glasses or contacts.
- ☐ Your Health Care Proxy form and other advance directives, if you filled them out.
- ☐ Your breathing device for sleep apnea (such as a CPAP or BiPAP machine), if you have one. If you cannot bring your machine with you, we will give you one to use while you're in the hospital.

What to expect

When you get to the hospital, take the M elevators to the 6th floor. Enter through the glass doors. Check in at the desk.

Many staff members will ask you to say and spell your name and birth date. This is for your safety. People with the same or a similar name may be having surgery on the same day.

Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you have. They will ask you to sign a consent form (a form that says you agree to the procedure and understand the risks).

When it's time for your procedure, your nurse will bring you to the procedure room and help you onto the exam table. A member of your anesthesia team will place an intravenous (IV) catheter into your vein, usually in your hand or arm. At first, you'll get fluids through the IV, but it will be used later to give you anesthesia (medicine to make you sleepy). Once you're asleep, your doctor will start your procedure.

During your celiac plexus block procedure

You'll lie on your stomach on the table with a pillow under your hips. Your back will be cleaned. Your doctor will give you an injection to numb the area about half way up your back. They will use X-rays to guide the needle with the block. They will inject the medicine into the area of your celiac plexus. Your doctor will remove the needle and place a bandage (Band-Aid®) on the site.

Your procedure will take about 90 minutes.

After your celiac plexus block procedure

In the hospital

When you wake up after your procedure, you will be in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). A nurse will be monitoring your body temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels. You will stay in the PACU until you're fully awake.

When you wake up, you may:

- Feel dizzy for a moment.
- Have a full and warm feeling in your abdomen.
- Feel nauseous, feel like you're going to throw up, or both.
- Feel drowsy or confused. You'll stay in the recovery room until you feel better.

Your nurse will review your discharge instructions with you and your caregiver before you go home.

At home

- You can keep taking your pain medicine right after your procedure.
- Your back may feel sore for a few days in the area where the needle was placed.
- You may have diarrhea (loose or watery bowel movements) for 3 to 5 days.
- Do not drive or use heavy machinery for 24 hours after your procedure.

- Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours after your procedure.
- You can take the Band-Aid® off the night of or the morning after your procedure.
- You can shower the day after your procedure.

One of your healthcare providers from the Pain Service will call you 2 to 3 business days after your procedure to see how you're feeling.

How to manage pain after your celiac plexus block procedure

- You may have more pain for 24 hours after the procedure. You may have to take extra doses of your medicine for 1 to 2 days. If the pain continues for over 48 hours (2 days), call your doctor.
- It may be a few days or more before you feel the full effects of the block. Keep taking your pain medicine as prescribed. Your healthcare provider will tell you how to slowly lower your pain medicine based on how well the block relieves your pain.

The celiac plexus block works differently for everyone. The block can last several weeks to several months. When it wears off, your doctor will discuss other options with you.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- You have a fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher.
- You have changes to your pain within 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days) after your procedure.
- You have redness or swelling at the injection site.
- You have any problems.
- You have questions or concerns.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Anesthesia Pain Service at 212-639-6851. You can reach a staff member Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. After 4 p.m., during the weekend, or on holidays, call 212-639-2000 and ask for the anesthesia pain person on call.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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