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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 medicines before your procedure. Talk with your healthcare provider about which medicines are safe for you to stop taking. We've included some common examples below.

#### Blood thinners

Blood thinners are medicines that affect the way your blood clots. If you take blood thinners, ask the healthcare provider performing your procedure what to do. They may recommend you stop taking the medicine. This will depend on the type of procedure you're having and the reason you're taking blood thinners.

Examples of common blood thinners are listed below. There are others, so be sure your care team knows all the medicine you take. **Do not stop taking your blood thinner without talking with a member of your care team.**

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Apixaban (Eliquis®)   | • Meloxicam (Mobic®)   |
| • Aspirin               | • Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®) |
| • Celecoxib (Celebrex®) |  |
| • Cilostazol (Pletal®)  |  |
| • Clopidogrel (Plavix®) | • Pentoxifylline (Trental®)  |

- Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)
- Dalteparin (Fragmin®)
- Dipyridamole (Persantine®)
- Edoxaban (Savaysa®)
- Enoxaparin (Lovenox®)
- Fondaparinux (Arixtra®)
- Heparin (shot under your skin)
- Prasugrel (Effient®)
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
- Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine®, Sulfazine®)
- Ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
- Tinzaparin (Innohep®)
- Warfarin (Jantoven®, Coumadin®)

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/check-med-supplement)). It has information about medicines you must avoid before your procedure.

## **Medicines for diabetes**

Before your procedure, talk with the healthcare provider who prescribes your insulin or other medicine for diabetes. They may need to change the dose of the medicine you take for diabetes. Ask them what you should do the morning of your procedure.

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

## **Diuretics (water pills)**

A diuretic is a medication that makes you urinate (pee) more often. Hydrochlorothiazide (Microzide®) and furosemide (Lasix®) are common diuretics.

If you take any diuretics, ask the healthcare provider doing your procedure what to do. You may need to stop taking them the day of your procedure.

## **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 scan or procedure, 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 you have an extra device with you to put on after your scan or procedure.

You may not be sure how to manage your glucose 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 67<sup>th</sup> and East 68<sup>th</sup> Streets)  
New York, NY 10065  
Take the M elevators to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

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 and drinking: 8 hours before your arrival time**



- **Stop eating 8 hours before your arrival time, if you have not already.**
  - Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop eating earlier. If they do, follow their instructions.
- 8 hours before your arrival time, do not eat or drink anything except these clear liquids:
  - Water.
  - Soda.

- Clear juices, such as lemonade, apple, and cranberry juices. Do not drink orange juice or juices with pulp.
- Black coffee or tea (without any type of milk or creamer).
- Sports drinks, such as Gatorade®.
- Gelatin, such as Jell-O®.

You can keep having these until 2 hours before your arrival time.

## **The day of your celiac plexus block procedure**

### **Instructions for drinking: 2 hours before your arrival time**



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

### **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.

## Where to park

MSK's parking garage is on East 66<sup>th</sup> Street between York and 1<sup>st</sup> avenues. If you have questions about prices, call 212-639-2338.

To get to the garage, turn onto East 66<sup>th</sup> Street from York Avenue. The garage is about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue. It's on the right (north) side of the street. There's a tunnel you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital.

There are other parking garages on:

- East 69<sup>th</sup> Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> avenues.
- East 67<sup>th</sup> Street between York and 1<sup>st</sup> avenues.
- East 65<sup>th</sup> Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> avenues.

## What to expect

When you get to the hospital, take the M elevators to the 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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