

Sciatic Nerve Block (Posterior Approach, Electric Stimulation)



Overview

This procedure is an injection of anesthesia (or an anesthetic/steroid mixture) around the sciatic nerve. It can be used to block the pain of surgery on the knee, leg ankle or foot, or it can be used to manage the pain of chronic issues in the lower extremity.

Preparation

In preparation for the procedure, the patient is positioned to expose the buttock. The physician presses against the skin of the gluteal region to feel for bony landmarks of the femur and hip. These landmarks help determine the precise entry point for the needle. The tissue at the entry point is numbed with an injection of local anesthesia.

Needle Placement

The physician will use a needle attached to both a syringe and an electric nerve stimulator. The nerve stimulator will ensure correct placement of the needle tip. The needle is carefully advanced through the numbed skin down to the sciatic nerve. The nerve stimulator is activated to administer weak electric pulses to the patient. These pulses may cause twitches in the muscles of the gluteus region, the leg and the foot. Twitches of the hamstring confirm that the needle is placed correctly.

Injection

The physician injects the anesthetic (or anesthetic/steroid mixture) through the needle. The medication bathes the main trunk of the sciatic nerve, temporarily blocking sensation in the leg or relieving chronic pain and inflammation.

End of Procedure

When the injection is complete, the needle is carefully removed and a small bandage is placed over the injection site. The duration of the injection varies depending on the type of medication administered and the goal of the procedure.

