

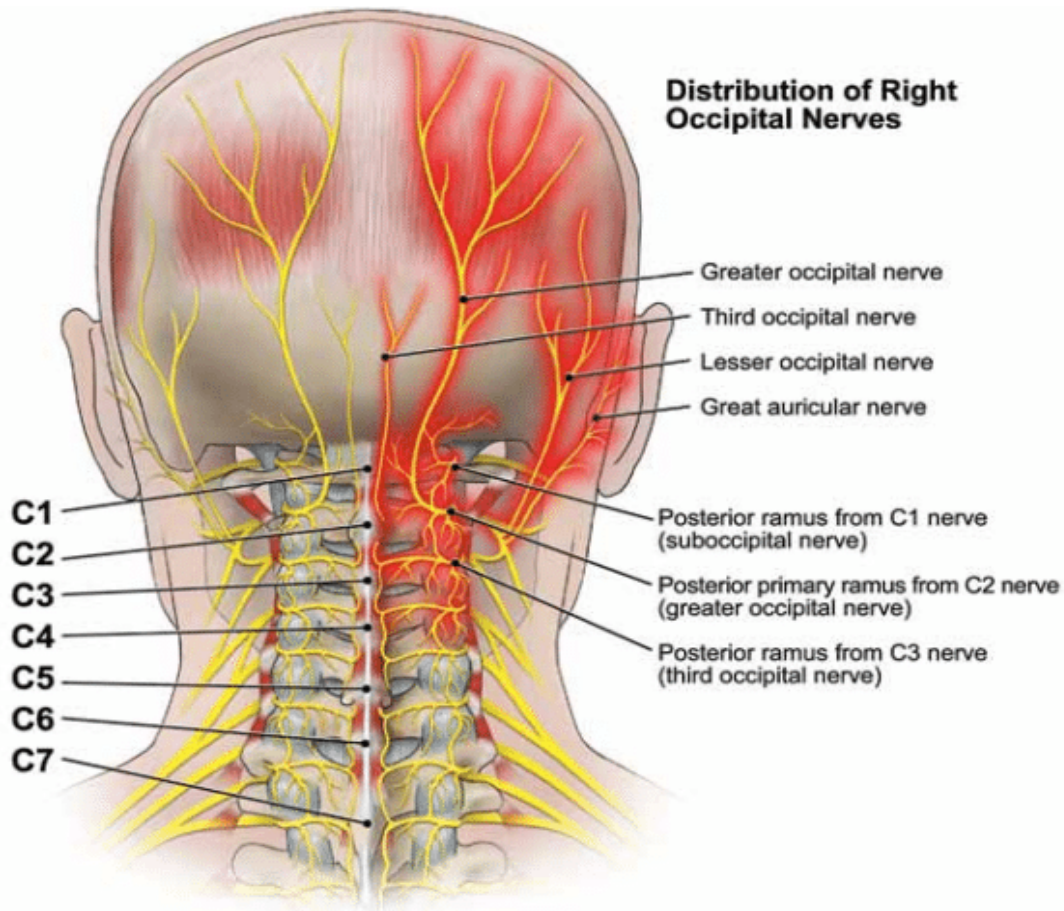


What is an occipital nerve block?

An occipital nerve block is a procedure that is helpful for headaches, especially headaches that radiate from the neck and go up the sides of the head. This procedure is beneficial for people with headaches that have not responded to any other medications. Many people with this kind of headache feel that the headache goes to their eyes. Occipital nerve block is a simple office procedure which includes an injection of steroids and the local anesthetic in the vicinity the occipital nerve.

Why perform an occipital nerve block?

An occipital nerve block can be used for maintenance of headaches when other medications have not helped enough. This is a simple injection, which can decrease both the frequency and intensity of your headaches.



Can anyone have an occipital nerve block?

Most people can have an occipital nerve block. This procedure can be done by landmark identification in the office. Your doctor may prefer to do it under ultrasound guidance especially if you have had surgery or trauma to the area.

What are the risks and complications?



Some of the risks with occipital nerve block include injection into the occipital artery which can cause seizure as well as stroke. The risk of this is extremely rare and is very unlikely.

The most common problems relate to local anesthetic which may be used. Local anesthetic could be injected into a blood vessel which can cause lightheadedness, seizure, numbness around the mouth.

Infection is always a risk whenever anything is injected into the body, and we take precautions to avoid this by performing the procedure as a fully sterile technique. If an infection does get in it can produce the symptoms of feeling unwell, headache, and stiffness of the neck. This can occur quite soon after the injection.

Overall, these complications are extremely rare. However, if you start to suffer from any of these symptoms, you must go and see your doctor or the Emergency Room of your local hospital urgently (do not go to Urgent Care), and inform them that you have had an injection.

How is the procedure performed?

The procedure is performed in the office. When you arrive a small needle may be inserted into one of your veins, for safety, so that should any drugs be required, they can be easily given. You will be expected to lie on the table face down.

Local anesthetic is injected into the skin and deeper tissues to reduce the discomfort of the procedure. However, when the needle is inserted there will be a feeling of someone pushing in your head, which is normal. This can be done on both the left and the right. When the operator has put the needle in and has



confirmed that the needle is in the correct place, the bone cement will be given and the needle removed.

What pain might you experience after the procedure?

The amount of pain experienced might become worse for a short period of time. If this occurs, it is not dangerous and should settle over time.

Will you be followed up afterwards?

You will be called for follow up to determine how the injection has helped you.

Important information

Please let us know before if you have:

A cold/flu

Fever/chills

A persistent cough

You are taking a course of antibiotics prior to procedure

Or there has been any significant change in your overall health as this may affect your procedure.

Failure to do so may result in your procedure being cancelled on the day.

Medication

Please take all your prescribed medication as normal prior to your procedure unless you have been otherwise advised

Please bring a list of all your current medication when you



attend for your procedure

Can I eat before I come in?

If you plan to get sedation for the procedure you should not eat from midnight the night before.

If you have any questions or concerns about this procedure call the office at 480-636-1225.

This handout should not be considered more important than your doctors advice when you spoke to him in the clinic. The information contained in this is generalized and may not pertain to your specific condition.