

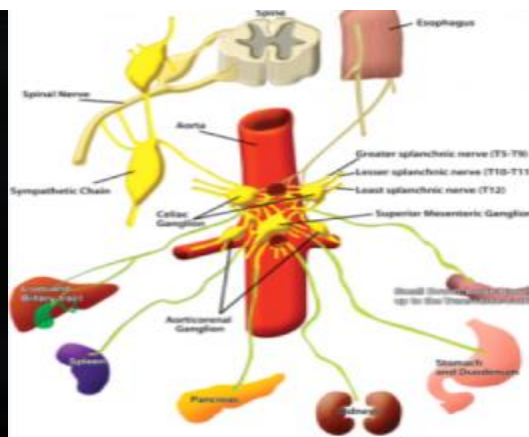
Celiac Plexus Blocks

For chronic abdominal pain, a celiac plexus block may work extremely well. Any number of conditions that cause pain in the abdomen may benefit as the nerves that are blocked serve a broad area with sensation.

The injection can change the way the brain perceives pain signals from the abdomen by blocking their transmission.

The celiac plexus is actually a bundle of nerves located behind the stomach, near the front of the diaphragm. The nerve bundle supplies sensation to a large amount of blood vessels in the area along with the gallbladder, kidney, spleen, liver, stomach, adrenal glands and intestines.

What conditions benefit from a celiac block?



The celiac plexus supplies sensation to a lot of abdominal organs.

There are quite a few, such as Crohn's disease, Inflammatory Bowel Disorder, pancreatitis and cancer.

Pancreatic cancer and other upper abdominal cancers may not receive adequate relief from narcotic medications, but excellent pain relief from the celiac block.

The procedure is performed as an outpatient, with the patient face down. IV sedation may be given for the procedure, but it is not absolutely necessary.

Pain management doctors in Los Angeles use real time x-ray (fluoroscopy) for the procedure. Most doctors use a bilateral approach (2 needles).

Once the needles are in satisfactory position, the doctor injects contrast material to confirm accuracy.



Numbing medicine is then injected, along with potentially phenol or an additional medication to lengthen pain relief. The procedure may serve two purposes. The first purpose is as a diagnostic procedure to see if it will work. The second is for therapeutic reasons.

The procedure takes around 30 minutes overall and may be repeated every few weeks to months as necessary. Pain doctors may also perform a radiofrequency ablation for longer duration pain relief. Celiac plexus blocks have been shown to work very well for a number of abdominal pain conditions. They are effective at decreasing the amount of opiates necessary for pain relief and about three fourths of individuals obtain two to four months of great pain relief (Rykowski et al, Anesthesiology 2000).

Complications from the procedure are unusual, and may include infection, bleeding, nerve injury or failure to obtain pain relief.

If you are dealing with abdominal pain from any number of the conditions discussed, a celiac plexus block may help tremendously.