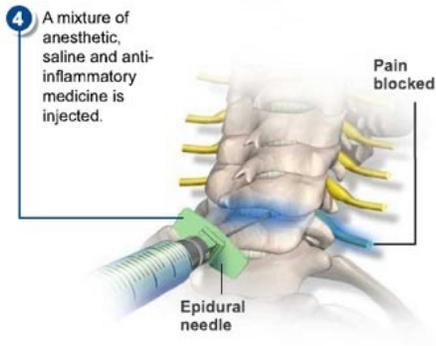
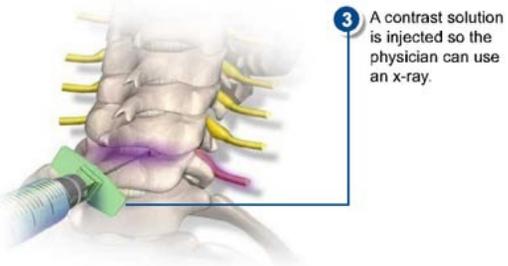
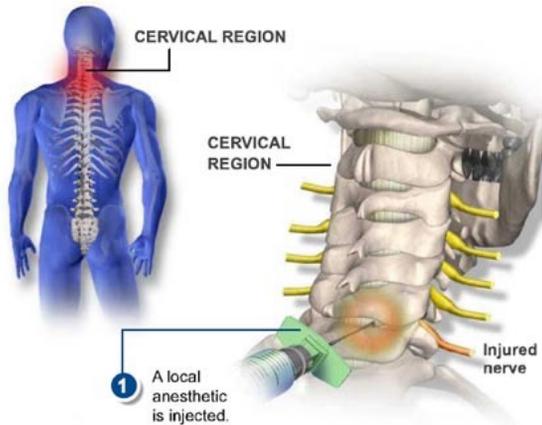


# Occipital Nerve Block



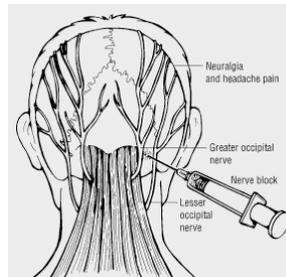
## **Northwest Spine and Pain Medicine**

2607 S. Southeast Blvd Bdg A  
Spokane WA 99223

And

5901 N Lidgerwood  
Suite 218  
Spokane, WA 99208

Ph. (509) 464-6208  
Fax 888-316-1928



## **Occipital Nerve Block**

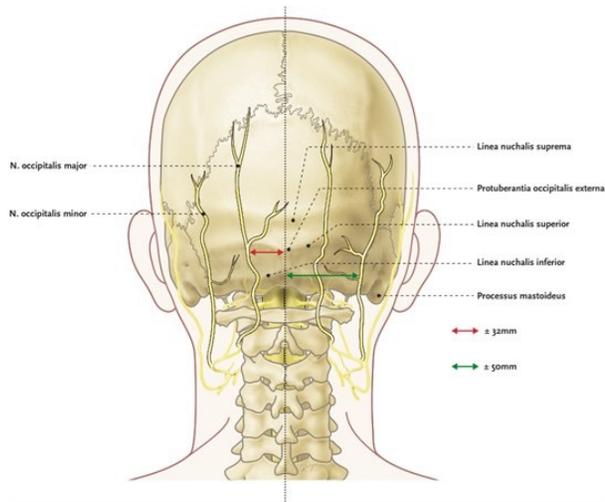
**For the Treatment of**

An occipital nerve block is an injection of a steroid or other medication around the greater and lesser occipital nerves that are located on the back of the head just above the neck area.

**Your injection has been  
scheduled for:**

**Date:**

**Time:**



### What is the purpose of an occipital nerve block?

The steroid injected reduces the inflammation and swelling of tissue around the occipital nerves. This may in turn reduce pain, and other symptoms caused by inflammation or irritation of the nerves and surrounding structures. Typically, headaches over the back of the head, including certain types of tension headaches and migraine headaches, may respond to occipital nerve blocks.

### How long does the occipital nerve block take?

The actual injection takes only a few minutes.

### What is actually injected?

The injection consists of a local anesthetic and a steroid medication.

### Will the occipital nerve block hurt?

The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and deeper tissues. So, there is some pain involved. However, the skin and deeper tissues are numbed with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle during the performance of the block.

### How is the occipital nerve block performed?

It is done with the patient seated or lying down. The skin and hair of the back of the head are cleaned with antiseptic solution and then the injection is carried out.

### Can I have sedation?

Yes, we offer sedation, which will require an IV insertion by our RN. The medication does not put you to sleep, it will just take the edge off of your anxiety and pain. If you chose to have sedation, it is required by law that you bring a driver that stays in the office throughout the entire procedure.

### What should I expect after the occipital nerve block?

Immediately after the injection, you may feel that your pain may be gone or quite less. This is due to the local anesthetic injected. This will last only for a few hours. Your pain may return and you may have a sore head for a day or two. This is due to the mechanical process of needle insertion as well as initial irritation from the steroid itself. You should start noticing a more lasting pain relief starting the third day or so.

### What should I do after the occipital nerve block?

You will rest for a while in the office. Most patients can drive themselves home, unless sedated. We advise the patient to take it easy for several hours after the procedure. You may want to apply ice to the injected area. You can perform any activity you can tolerate.

### Can I go to work to work the next day?

Unless there are complications, you should be able to return to work the next day. The most common thing you may feel is a sore head at the injection site.

### How long does the effect of the medication last?

The immediate effect is usually from the local anesthetic injected. This wears off in a few hours. The steroid starts working in about 3 to 5 days and its effect can last for several days to a few months.

### How many occipital nerve blocks do I need to have?

It varies. The injections are done about one week apart only if needed. If the first injection does not relieve your symptoms in about a week to two weeks, you may be recommended to have a second injection. If you respond to the injections, you may be recommended for additional injections when the symptoms return.

### What are the risks and side effects of occipital nerve blocks?

Generally speaking, this procedure is safe. However, with any procedure there are risks, side effects and possibility of complications. The most common side effect is temporary pain at the injection site. Other uncommon risks involve infection, bleeding, worsening of symptoms etc. Fortunately, serious side effects and complications are uncommon.

### Who should not have an occipital nerve block?

If you are allergic to any of the medications to be injected, if you are on a blood thinning medication, if you have an active infection going on, or if you have poorly controlled diabetes or heart disease, you should not have an occipital nerve block or at least consider postponing it if postponing would improve your overall medical condition.