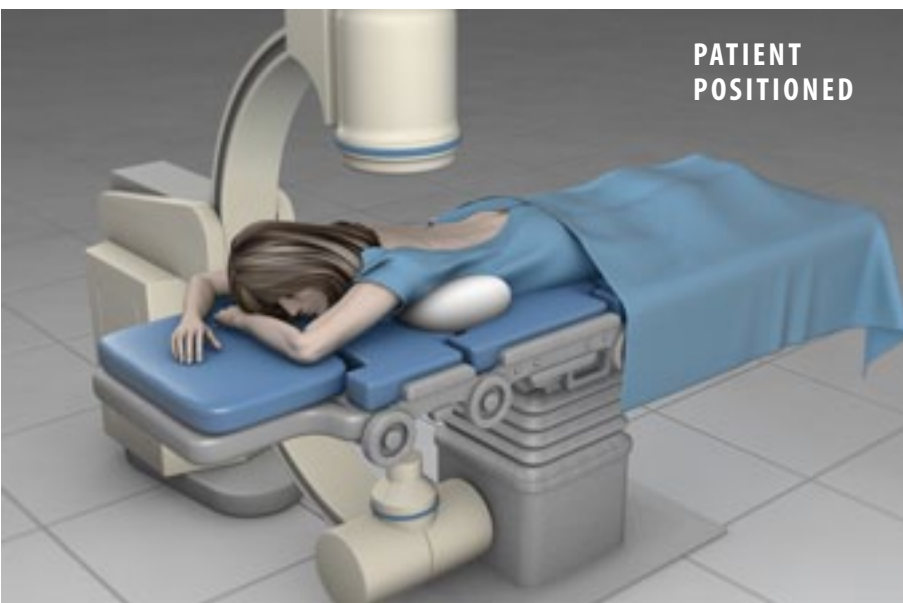


## Thoracic Epidural Steroid Injection



### Overview

This outpatient procedure is an injection performed to relieve pain in the upper back.

### Preparation

The patient sits or lies down to expose the back. The back is cleaned and sterilized, and a local anesthetic is administered to numb the tissue of the injection site down to the spinal column.

### Inserting the Needle

The physician uses an x-ray device called a fluoroscope to guide a needle down to the vertebra that is causing the pain. The needle is carefully pushed into the epidural space, which is the area surrounding the spinal cord. A contrast solution is injected to confirm the needle's position.

### Inserting the Medication

The physician injects a steroid-anesthetic mix into the epidural space, bathing the painful areas with soothing medication. The mixture will help reduce inflammation and reduce pain.

### End of Procedure

The needle is removed, and the injection site may be covered with a small bandage. Extended pain relief usually begins within three to five days of the injection. In some cases it may be necessary to repeat the procedure as many as three times to get the full benefit of the medication. However, many patients get significant relief from only one or two injections.

