

Superior Hypogastric Sympathetic Plexus Block (SHSPB)

What is a superior hypogastric sympathetic plexus?

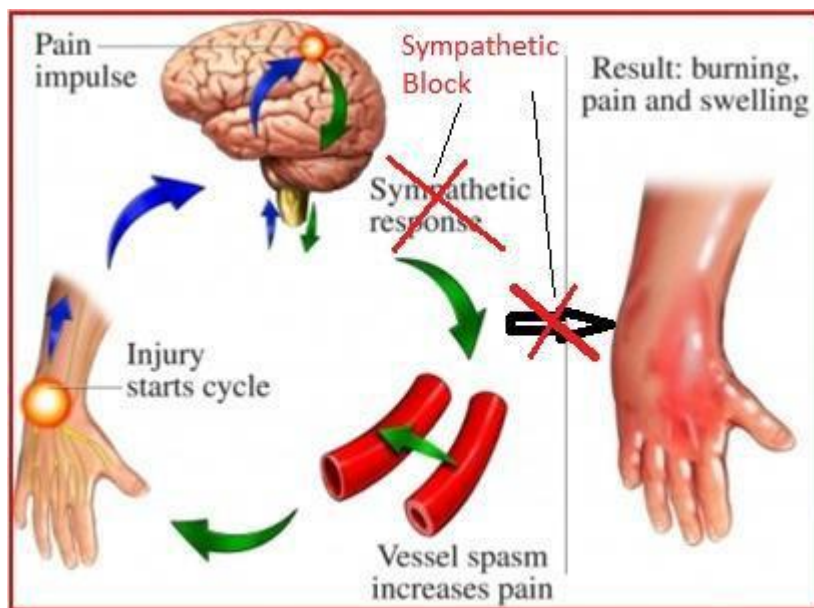
It is a complex network of nerves which controls the body's involuntary activities regulating lower abdomen and pelvic region. It has been implicated in neuropathic pain, vascular, and visceral pain. It is located anterior to the L5 vertebral body.

What are the indications of SHSPB?

Among many indications the listed are the main indications: pain involving the urethra, bladder, uterus, vagina, prostate, penis, testes, rectum, descending colon, and pain secondary to endometriosis/cancer.

How does SHSPB bring pain relief?

The sympathetic nerve becomes hyperactivity due to chronic pain. With the SHSPB is goal is to break the cycle of pain and decrease sympathetic outflow, and thus, allow more blood flow. This helps to desensitize the nerve fibers, increase blood flow, increase healing (due to increased blood flow) and decrease pain.

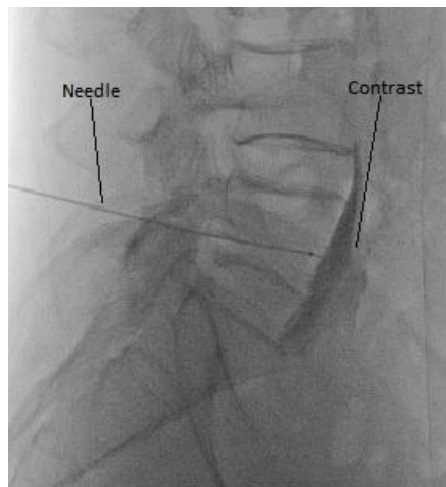


What are risks for the SHSPB?

Among many, here are few listed: visceral trauma, bleeding, epidural/intrathecal injection, bladder, rectal and erectile dysfunction.

How is the SHSPB injection performed?

After sterile preparation of the low back region, the injection site is localized under X-ray. Following the local anesthetic applied to the injection site, which can help decrease the injection site pain, the needle is guided toward the target site (anterior to L5 vertebral body) with the help of X-ray. After the target is localized, it can be further confirmed with liquid contrast, which can help further confirm the location of the SHSP. After the superior hypogastric plexus is confirmed, the local anesthetic medication is injected, and the needle is taken out at the end of the procedure.



What to expect after the SHSPB procedure?

This is an **outpatient procedure**. Patients are monitored in the recovery room after the procedure. Patient should receive instant relief after the procedure in 10-20 minutes. Patients are discharged from the recovery room once they have the discharge criteria.

How long the relief from the SHSPB would last for?

It varies from patient to patient. Usually, the pain relief can last up to 4-6 weeks, and may require repeat the SHSPB if necessary.

Please tell your pain physician if you are taking any blood thinners. For example: Coumadin, Plavix, Heparin, Lovenox and etc. The blood thinners need to be stopped before the interventional procedure, and the time frame will be prescribed by your pain physician.