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What to Expect with Your Procedure

We recognize that procedures can induce anxiety and can be uncomfortable, but we are committed to making the process as smooth as possible. The information below is intended to help you anticipate how your procedure visit will go.

Before the Procedure:

1. Most patients can drive themselves to and from the clinic for the procedure;
 - a. Procedures that **REQUIRE** a driver include:
 - i. **Any procedure done at Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital**
 - ii. Epidural steroid injection (ESI)
 - iii. Radiofrequency ablation
 - iv. Sympathetic block
 - v. Stellate Ganglion block
2. Take most of your usual medications, but try to avoid using your pain medications the morning of the procedure.
3. Please inform Dr. Gilthorpe if you take any blood thinners. (Many procedures can be done with blood thinners, but sometimes they will need to be held.)
4. Please inform Dr. Gilthorpe if you have any allergies, or intolerances.
5. Please inform Dr. Gilthorpe if you have kidney disease or have reactions with IV contrasts or dyes.
6. If your procedure includes steroids, and you are diabetic, your blood glucose may be elevated. You should talk with your primary care physician &/or endocrinologist about methods of managing this prior to the procedure.
7. We suggest wearing loose clothing to make the target area easily accessible.
8. If you are sick, or are on antibiotics, please call and reschedule

During the Procedure:

1. Your vitals will be checked before starting.
2. A series of simple questions will be asked, including your date of birth, type of procedure, left vs right vs both sides, allergies, and if you take blood thinners.
3. You may be asked to change into a gown if the target area is not accessible.
4. You will sit or lay on the procedure table, usually face down for neck and back procedures.
5. A sterilization solution (chlorhexidine or alcohol) will be used to clean your skin and minimize risk of infection.
6. A drape may be placed over the area to maintain sterility.
7. As Dr. Gilthorpe performs the procedure, you will feel some discomfort, but he will walk you through step-by-step.
8. After completion, bandaids may be placed over the injection site.



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After the Procedure:

1. Most patients have some soreness in the area that can persist for a few days.
2. Placing ice over the injection site for no more than 20 minutes at a time can help relieve this soreness.
3. Over the counter tylenol can also be utilized if ice is insufficient.
4. If your procedure included steroids, you may experience hot-flashes, mild headaches, or insomnia for a few days.
5. Some procedures can take up to 7 days before you have significant pain relief.
6. If you have an epidural, you may experience some numbness or weakness for a few hours, up to 24 hours.

Serious side effects are very rare, but if you have any of the following, you should go to an Emergency Room:

1. New weakness and numbness after the initial weakness and numbness wore off or persistent weakness over 24 hours.
2. Severe swelling, redness, or drainage at the procedure site.
3. Urinary incontinence.
4. High fever.