

Ganglion Impar Block

What is a ganglion impar block?

Nerves from the lower pelvic and groin regions intersect at the ganglion impar, carrying signals from these areas to the brain. Injury, chronic irritation, or inflammation of the areas supplied by these nerves can result in pain signals being carried to the brain.

The ganglion impar sits just in front of your sacrum (area just above the tailbone).

A ganglion impar block is an injection of numbing medication to this area to reduce specific anorectal (anus and rectum), perineal (space between the genitals and anus), pelvic or genital pain.



Why do I need this procedure?

The block can help to treat or reduce chronic anorectal/perineal/pelvic/genital pain that is not well controlled despite other pain medications or therapies.

It can be both diagnostic (allows your physician to determine if the pain experienced is due to nerves supplying these areas) and therapeutic (provides pain relief).

This block is commonly (but not exclusively) administered for treatment of pain resulting from the following conditions:

- Cancer of the vagina/vulva/scrotum/rectum/anus/bladder
- Cancer of the vagina/vulva/scrotum/rectum/anus/bladder
- Chronic prostatic infection/prostate cancer/radiation proctitis
- Endometriosis
- Coccydynia
- Complex Regional Pain syndrome



How is the procedure performed?

- The block is done with you lying face down on a table, and with X-Ray or ultrasound guidance. You might be given some medication to reduce your anxiety and discomfort associated with the procedure.
- Your lower back and buttock area is cleaned with an anti-septic solution. Local anaesthetic (LA) will be injected under your skin to reduce the discomfort from the block needle.
- The block needle is then inserted and guided to the appropriate location. If X-Ray is being used, contrast (dye that lights up under X-Ray) may be injected to confirm appropriate needle placement.
- LA, with or without corticosteroids (anti-inflammatory), is then administered through the needle near the ganglion impar.

What are the risks and complications of the surgery?

Ganglion impar blocks are generally very safe, with a low risk of severe complications.

Common side effects:

- Bruising and soreness at the injection site

Rare but serious complications:

- Infection around the injection site
- Bleeding
- Injury to surrounding structures (rectum, bladder)
- Sexual dysfunction
- Urinary incontinence from bladder dysfunction
- Lower limb weakness or numbness due to nerve injury
- Severe drug allergies
- Local anaesthetic toxicity
- Seizures



What can I expect after the procedure?

- You will be monitored for some time prior to discharge back home or to the ward. Vital signs will be taken regularly, and our nursing staff will discuss some post-procedure instructions with you.
- If you are being discharged home, you should be accompanied home by a responsible adult and you must not drive home by yourself.
- Some soreness is expected at the site of injection initially, but should improve. Keep the injection area clean and dry for the next 2-3 days.
- There might be temporary initial worsening of your pain prior to improvement after about 2-7 days.
- Your doctor will review you after the procedure to assess its effectiveness and counsel you regarding further management, which might involve a more permanent block of the ganglion impar for longer-term pain relief.

What are the other options?

Your pain specialist will discuss other therapeutic options to address your pain as indicated. These may include medications, physiotherapy, psychological intervention, surgery, or a combination of any of these modalities.



Contributed by Department of Anaesthesia

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