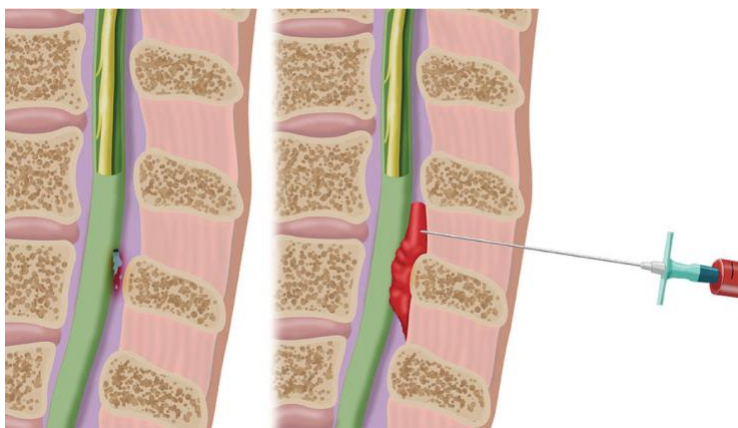


EMORY PAIN CENTER

Blood Patch Procedure

What is a blood patch? A blood patch is a medical procedure used to treat a cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leak in the spine. It involves injecting a small amount of the patient's own blood into the epidural space, which is the outermost part of the spinal canal. The blood forms a clot that seals the leak and helps restore normal CSF pressure.



Why is a blood patch performed? A blood patch is performed to relieve symptoms associated with a CSF leak. CSF leaks can occur spontaneously or as a complication of certain medical procedures, such as a lumbar puncture or epidural anesthesia. Symptoms of a CSF leak may include severe headache, neck pain, nausea, sensitivity to light, and changes in hearing or vision. A blood patch helps alleviate these symptoms by sealing the leak and restoring the normal CSF pressure.

How is a blood patch performed? A blood patch procedure is usually performed as an outpatient procedure. You will be positioned in a way that allows the doctor to access the area where the blood patch will be performed. The skin around the injection site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. A small amount of blood will be drawn from your arm and injected into the epidural space near the site of the CSF leak. The injection is guided by imaging techniques, such as fluoroscopy or ultrasound, to ensure accurate needle placement. The blood forms a clot that seals the leak. The procedure usually takes about 30 minutes to an hour.

What should I expect during a blood patch procedure? Prior to the procedure, you may be asked to refrain from eating or drinking for a certain period of time. An intravenous (IV) line may be inserted to provide fluids or medications if needed. The injection site may be numbed with a local anesthetic to minimize discomfort during the procedure. You will be

awake during the blood patch and may feel pressure or a sensation of warmth as the blood is injected. You will be monitored closely afterward to ensure there are no immediate complications.

What are the side effects/risks of a blood patch? Blood patch procedures are generally safe, but like any medical procedure, they carry some risks. Common side effects may include temporary discomfort or pain at the injection site, bruising, or minor bleeding. In rare cases, infection, allergic reactions, nerve damage, or a recurrence of symptoms may occur. It is important to discuss any concerns or potential complications with your healthcare provider before the procedure.

What should I expect after a blood patch procedure? After the blood patch, you may experience immediate relief from the symptoms associated with the CSF leak. It is common to have some residual pain or soreness at the injection site, which should improve over time. Your healthcare provider may provide you with specific instructions regarding activity restrictions or any medications to take during the recovery period. It is important to report any new or worsening symptoms to your healthcare provider.