

# **EMORY PAIN CENTER**

## **Stellate Ganglion Block**

**What is a stellate ganglion?** The stellate ganglion is part of the sympathetic nervous system and located in your neck in front of the spine. It is a collection of nerves that control the blood flow to your upper extremity (arm, forearm and hand) chest and face.

**What are the indication for a stellate ganglion block?** Medication can be injected into that area to relieve pain due to conditions such as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), shingles, peripheral vascular disease, excessive hand sweating, chest and facial pain.

**How is stellate ganglion block performed?** An IV will be placed prior to the procedure to provide relaxing medicine if needed. During the procedure, you will be asked to lie on your back. The skin overlying the area will be numbed with a local anesthetic agent. Fluoroscopy (x-ray) or ultrasound is used to precisely guide a thin needle towards the stellate ganglion which is by your voice box. You may feel pressure when the medicine is being injected. The procedure usually takes 15 to 30 minutes followed by a short recovery period.

**What to expect after the procedure?** Immediately after the procedure you may feel some of these symptoms: heaviness and drooping of the eye lid, stuffy nose, hoarse voice, sensation of a “lump” in your throat, flushing of your face or your eye may be red and warmth in your hand and arm on the same side of the procedure.

These effects are temporary and last a few hours. For some, pain relief may be immediate. It is important that you keep a pain diary to keep track of your response to the procedure.

### **What are the side effects/complications of the Stellate Ganglion Block?**

Complications are rare with the most common being temporary increase in pain near the injection site. Serious complications are very uncommon but may include bleeding, infection and nerve damage.

If you experience severe pain, fever, redness, swelling near the injection site or shortness of breath, call 911 or have someone take you to the nearest emergency room to be evaluated for procedure complication or infection.