



# Suprascapular Nerve Block Patient Education

Southern Coast Specialists offers a variety of minimally invasive pain treatment procedures that we have perfected to help you achieve pain relief. Our treatments have been proven effective and are on the cutting edge of science related to pain reduction. Our goal is to improve every patient's overall function and thus restore a better quality of life.

## What is a Suprascapular Nerve Block?

A suprascapular nerve block is an injection of a local anesthetic and steroid to block the nerves that influence pain in the shoulder. The ablation uses radiofrequency to decrease pain for a longer period.

Duration Less than 30 minutes

## How is it performed?

Prior to the steroid injection or ablation, you will be positioned on your stomach. The injection site will be cleaned, and local anesthetic will be used to numb the affected area. To ensure proper needle placement, your physician will utilize fluoroscopic x-ray technology or ultrasonic guidance. When the physician is assured the needle is in the correct location, a mixture of steroid and local anesthetic will be injected. If the steroid injection affords you significant pain relief, you will be eligible for radiofrequency denervation. This entails creating a heat lesion around the nerves in order to block the nerves from carrying pain signals to the brain.

The ablation lasts 60-100 seconds and feels like a warm, cramping sensation. This typically provides 6 months to a year of relief. You may continue taking all medications before the procedure.

## Conditions treated You might benefit from a suprascapular nerve block and ablation if you suffer from:

- Shoulder pain
- Rotator cuff injury
- Scapular pain

## What are some of the risks and side effects?

This procedure is a relatively safe, non-surgical treatment, with minimal risks of complications.

*Some of the most common or possible side effects are:*

- Weakness
- Infection
- Increased pain
- Vascular injection
- Bruising



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### What to expect after the procedure?

After the injection procedure, you might feel a weak or numb sensation where the medication was injected. As the numbing medication wears off over the first couple days, you may experience an increase in pain. Once the steroid begins to work, you should experience pain relief. If you have the ablation you may be sore for up to 3 weeks, but this usually resolves in 1 week. Ice is typically more helpful than heat during the first two to three days after the injection. If you have sedation, you should not drive or engage in physical activity for 24 hours following the procedure. Slowly ease back into exercise routines over a period of one to two weeks. You should call your doctor if you experience a fever over 101 within 72 hours of the procedure. After the radiofrequency procedure, you can expect to have soreness around the injection sites for up to 3 weeks. Pain relief is typically expected within a month of the procedure and this relief can last from 6 months to a year. However, not all patients will achieve pain relief with this procedure, and some will experience shorter periods of pain relief than others.

### Things to Do Before the Procedure

- Any dietary restrictions will be discussed on the day the procedure appointment is booked.
- Take all your medications as scheduled on the day of the procedure, unless directed otherwise.
  - Think of any questions for us and write them down.
  - Make the nurses and physicians aware of any new changes in your medical condition.
- Before you come in, let us know if you are taking any blood thinners (e.g., aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, Pletal) or anti-inflammatories.
  - Please remember to arrange for an adult to drive you home.

**If you have questions about this procedure, please see a Southern Coast Specialists representative.**

**If you are interested in learning more about our practice or treatment solutions, please visit [SCSpecialists.com](http://SCSpecialists.com).**