

# Epidural Steroid Injections (ESI)

**Epidural steroid injection (ESI)** is a non-surgical treatment that can help alleviate pain in the neck, arm, low back, and leg pain (sciatica) caused by irritation of the spinal nerves. ESIs are completed to relieve pain caused by spinal stenosis, spondylolysis, or disc herniation. The epidural injection distributes a long-term steroid and an anesthetic agent to the aggravated and inflamed spinal nerve. Medications are transported to the nerve through the epidural space, which is the area between the covering of the spinal cord and the vertebrae. The objective is to reduce pain so that patients may carry on their usual activities and, in some cases, continue additional physical therapy programs.

## What is a trans-foraminal epidural steroid injection (TF-ESI)?

This injection consists of either a long-lasting steroid (cortisone) and/or a local anesthetic. The drug delivered enters the neural foramen of the spine where the nerve roots emerge. This type of injection can be highly:

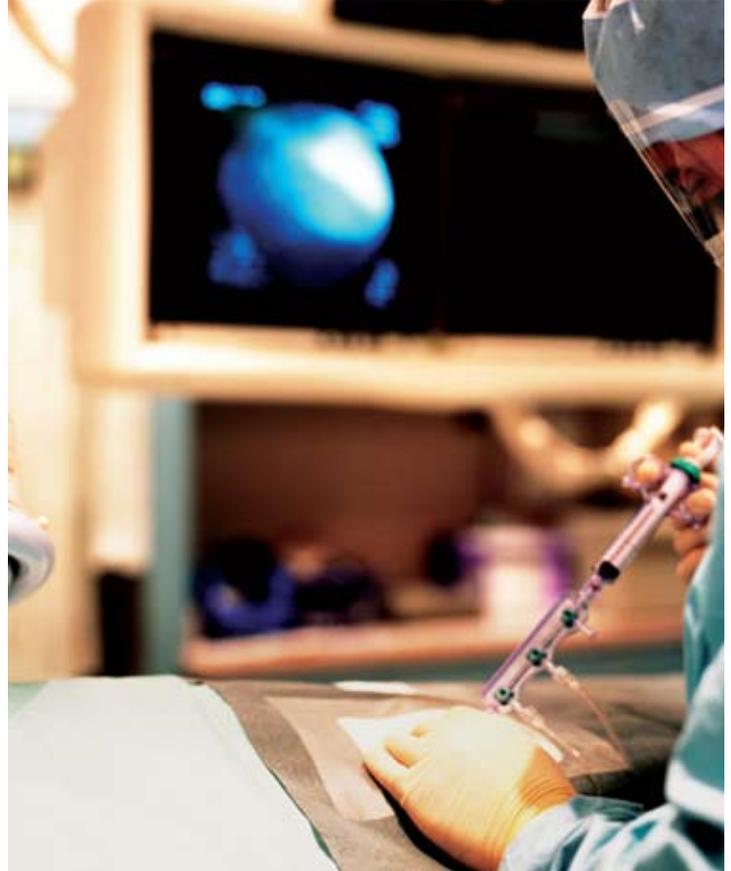
1. Diagnostic
2. Provocative
3. Therapeutic

By performing this type of injection, a doctor can localize the exact level of pathology that is causing spine pain especially in a patient that has multi-level changes and is considering spine surgery.

## Patient Selection for ESI

Patients with pain in the neck, arm, low back, or leg pain may benefit from ESI. Particularly those with the following conditions:

1. Spinal stenosis: a narrowing of the spinal canal and nerve root canal causing back and leg pain.
2. Spondylolysis: a weakness or fracture between the upper and lower facets of a vertebra. If the vertebra slips forward, called spondylolisthesis, it can compress the nerve roots causing pain.



3. Herniated disc: occurs when the gel-like center of an intervertebral disc pushes out from the center. Pain results when the disc material touches a nearby nerve.
4. Cervical radiculopathy
5. Thoracic radiculopathy
6. Lumbar radiculopathy
7. Sciatic radiculopathy



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