



LEARNING ABOUT SPHENOCATH PROCEDURES

What is the purpose of this procedure?

The sphenopalatine ganglion block can be useful to treat migraine headaches, cluster headaches, and a variety of facial pain conditions. The sphenopalatine ganglion is a group of nerve cells located deep in the face behind the nose. Many head and facial nerves also pass through this area. A small flexible catheter (Sphenocath) can be used to reach this area and deliver anesthetic to these nerves. For some people this can be an effective treatment for headache and facial pain.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- The risks are infrequent, and they include:
- Fainting
- Dizziness/lightheadedness
- Allergic reaction to medication
- Nosebleed
- No improvement or worsening of your pain in some cases

How should I prepare for the procedure?

You may need to stop taking certain medications several days before the procedure. Please remind the doctor of all prescription and over-the-counter medications you take, including herbal and vitamin supplements. The doctor will tell you if and when you need to discontinue the medications. Tell the doctor if you develop a cold, fever, or flu symptoms before your scheduled appointment, or if you have started taking antibiotics for an infection. You must bring a driver with you at the time of check in and check out. Your driver must accompany you to the clinic for your procedure. You can only be discharged to the care of a responsible adult driver 18 or older.

What will happen during the procedure?

1. You will receive a nasal spray (cold/congestion medicine) after you arrive that will help open the nasal passage and reduce secretions. You may also be given a spray of Lidocaine (numbing) medicine.
2. You will then be taken back to the procedure room and will lay down on a special procedure table next to the fluoroscope (x-ray).

3. The doctor will then slowly place the Sphenocath into the nasal passage using the fluoroscope to guide it. Most people experience very little or no discomfort as it is inserted.
4. Once positioned correctly, the anesthetic solution will be injected. You may feel some of the medicine in the back of your throat. Occasionally, it may make you cough or may make your eye tear up.

What should I do after the procedure?

You will be lying in the recovery area for 10 minutes with your head down to allow the medication to absorb. Some people may experience an unpleasant taste in their mouth and a temporary numbness in the throat. It is ok to eat and drink carefully after the procedure as the throat may feel numb for a period of time. Your response will be evaluated at your next follow-up visit.