

Lumbar Medial Branch Block Understanding Your Risks

This document outlines the potential complications associated with a **lumbar medial branch block (MBB)**. This is a minimally invasive, image-guided procedure performed under fluoroscopic (X-ray) guidance. A small amount of local anesthetic is injected near the medial branch nerves that supply the lumbar facet joints.

The usual purpose of this procedure is to **diagnose low back pain** believed to originate from the lumbar facet joints. This procedure is primarily diagnostic and is often used to determine whether a patient may benefit from further treatment such as radiofrequency ablation.

Risks:

- **Temporary increase in back pain or soreness at the injection site**
- **Vasovagal reaction** (lightheadedness, dizziness, fainting)
- **Allergic reaction to medications or contrast dye**
- **Infection** (superficial or deep, including abscess formation)
- **Bleeding or hematoma formation**
- **Nerve irritation or injury, including increased pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness**
- **Temporary numbness or sensory changes**
- **Muscle spasm or stiffness**
- **Failure to relieve symptoms or only temporary symptom relief**
- **Temporary systemic effects of medications** (facial flushing, insomnia, mood changes, elevated blood sugar if steroids are used)
- **Spinal cord or cauda equina injury** (extremely rare)

Risk Factors for Increased Complications:

- **Use of blood thinners or bleeding disorders**
- **Prior lumbar spine surgery, altered anatomy, or deformity**

Patient Acknowledgment:

By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand the above risks associated with lumbar medial branch blocks and all questions have been answered to the patient's satisfaction.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Patient Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

