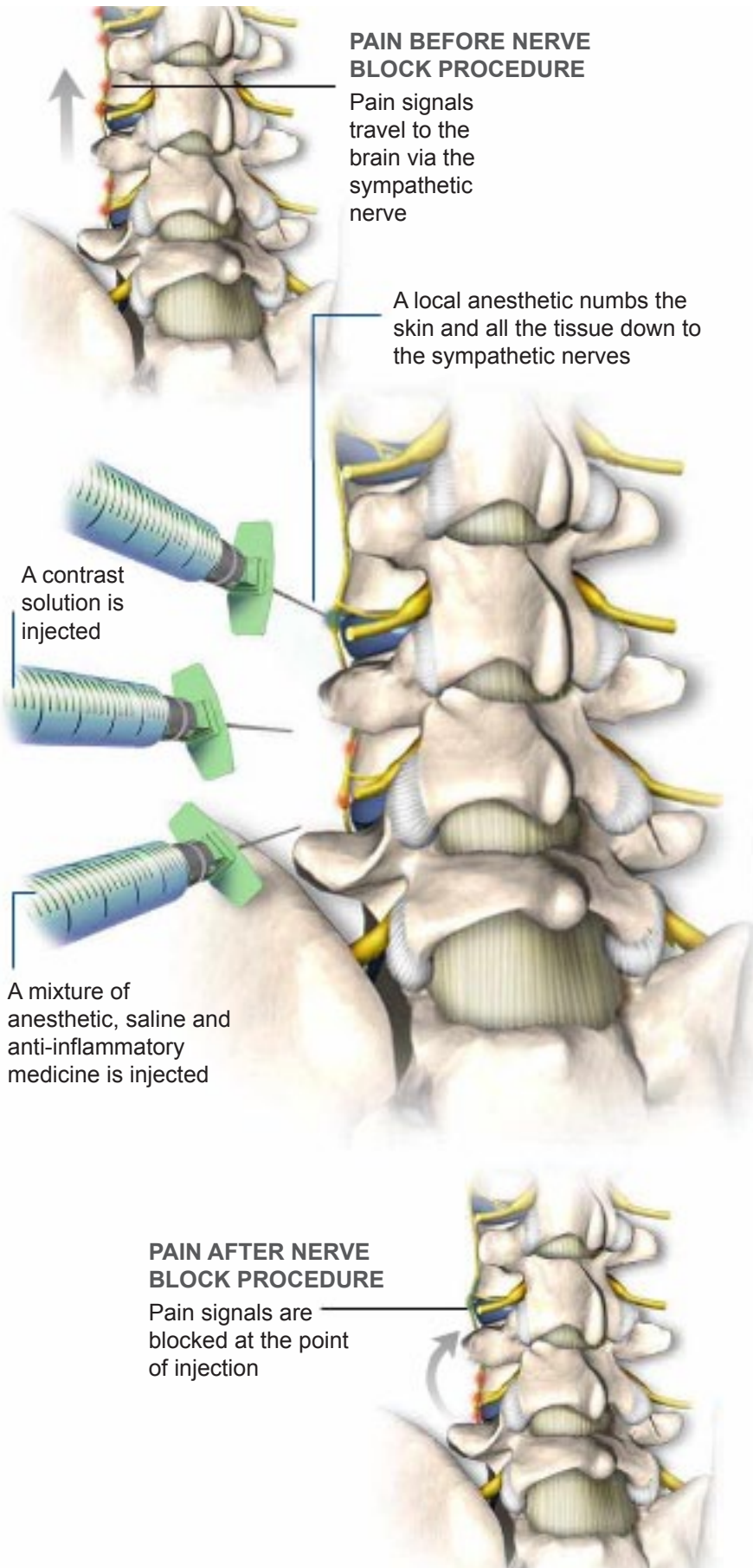


LUMBAR SYMPATHETIC BLOCK



Overview

This procedure is performed to relieve leg pain caused by complex regional pain syndromes, which may develop after an injury to a joint or limb. Usually a series of injections are needed to treat the problem.

IV Administered

Patients lie either on their side or stomach on a table equipped with a special x-ray (fluoroscopic) unit, and an intravenous (IV) line is started to administer medication to relax the patient. A local anesthetic numbs the skin and tissue down to the sympathetic nerves.

Contrast Dye Injected

The physician slides a needle through the anesthetized track. A contrast solution is injected. The physician uses a fluoroscope to identify the painful areas and to confirm the correct location of the needle tip.

Medication Injected

Next, a mixture of anesthetic, saline and anti-inflammatory medicine is injected around the sympathetic nerves to block pain signals from reaching the brain.

End of Procedure

The legs may feel weak or numb for a few hours after the procedure. Then, pain from the legs should improve. More blocks may be repeated about once a week until the pain subsides. Patients who are on blood-thinning medications or who have an infection near the injection site should not receive the block.