

## What is an occipital nerve block?

Occipital nerve blocks are performed under ultrasound guidance in the office. The patient will be laid on their stomachs for the injections. A local anesthetic will be injected and then ultrasound will be used to find exact placement of the needle. A mix of steroid and anesthetic will be injected around the inflamed occipital nerves. Multiple injections will be needed to treat the nerve branches.

The injection should decrease inflammation in the occipital nerve and surrounding area. This decrease of inflammation should help with pain from migraines, cervicogenic headaches, tight muscles, and other causes.



**Trinity Health System**  
Orthopedics & Sports Medicine

**Dr. Suresh Srinivasan**

3150 Johnson Road, 2nd Floor  
Steubenville, OH 43952

4100 Johnson Road  
Steubenville, OH 43952

trinityhealth.com  
740.314.5138

 **Trinity Health System**

# Occipital Nerve Block

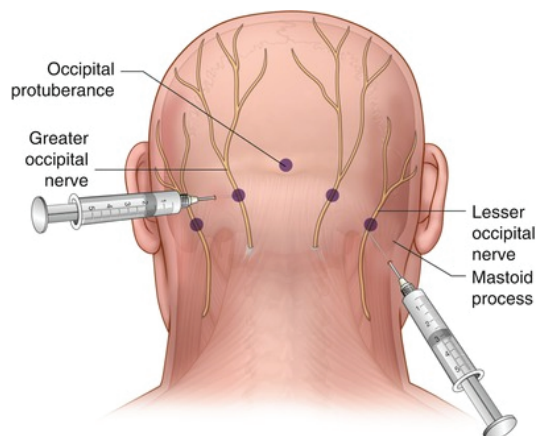
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## Why am I getting an occipital nerve block?

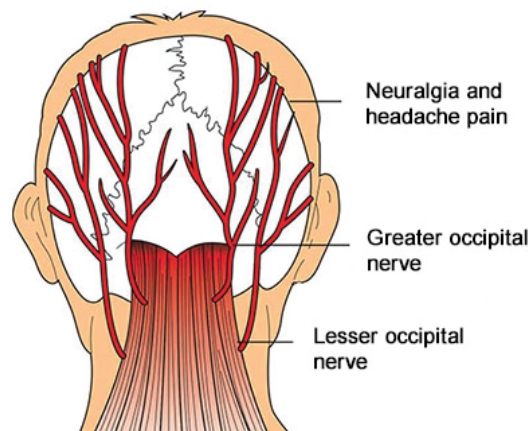
Occipital nerve blocks are injections that can help alleviate the pain from migraines, chronic headaches, and occipital neuralgia. The occipital nerve can become inflamed from injury, tight neck muscles, and arthritis in the neck.

The injection will help decrease the inflammation in the occipital nerve therefore decreasing pain.



## Anatomy

The occipital nerves are groups of nerves that come from the C2 and C3 spinal nerve branches. The nerves run from the spine and up the back of the head and behind the ears. These nerves provide sensation to a large portion of the back of the scalp and some of the ear. The nerves pass through multiple muscles, which is why injury to neck musculature can affect these nerves.



## Complications

As with any procedure, complications can occur, although they are rare. Of these complications, the most common would be a temporary increase of pain near the injection site. If this occurs, apply ice to the area on the day of the procedure. If the pain persists, apply moist heat to the area. Another complication that can occur but that is rare is a headache.

Serious complications are very uncommon but may include bleeding, infection, or nerve damage. If pain continues to increase, contact your doctor. If you experience severe pain, fever, redness, or swelling around the injection site, have someone take you to the nearest emergency room to be evaluated for possible procedure complications or infection.

## Expectations

The relief given by local anesthetics will wear off in several hours after the procedure. The duration of relief from the steroid varies from person to person. Expect to return to normal activities and work the day after the procedure.