



The Orofacial Pain Center

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Sphenopalatine Ganglion (SPG) Block.

The **Sphenopalatine Ganglion (SPG)** is a group of nerve cells that is linked to the trigeminal nerve, the main nerve involved in headaches and facial pains. The SPG is located in the back of the nose, carries information about sensation, including pain, and also plays a role in autonomic functions, such as tearing and nasal congestion.

The link between the SPG and the trigeminal nerve is important in head and face pain. If you apply local anesthetics (or numbing medications) to block or partially block the SPG, this can be helpful in reducing head and facial pain.

There currently are 3 FDA cleared, commercially available catheters for use. I have selected the **Tx360® device** because of its accuracy and patient comfort.

SPG Block Procedure.

The day of the procedure you should be able to travel to the office and drive home afterwards. No sedating medications are needed for the procedure. Before and after the procedure, your blood pressure and heart rate will be checked.

With the Tx360® device, you will remain seated during the procedure. The device will be gently placed into one nostril and the numbing medication will be administered through a thin, flexible catheter. This will be repeated in the other nostril. The entire procedure takes between 10-20 seconds. You will be asked to remain for observation for approximately 20 min after the procedure.

During the procedure you may feel mild pressure or irritation, like you need to sneeze. You may also experience a brief or quick burning sensation or have a bad taste in your mouth as some of the numbing medication may drip into the throat.

SPG Side Effects.

The most common side effects are all temporary, including numbness in the throat, low blood pressure, and nosebleed. If you do experience throat numbness, this should not last more than 30 min and is related to swallowing a small amount of the numbing medication. During this time, it is safest if you avoid eating or drinking anything to avoid the risk of choking. Nasal bleeding or infection has been reported in some cases. Rarely, a temporary increase in pain has been reported.

How Often Do I Need To Have This Procedure Done?

SPG blocks can be repeated as often as needed to reduce pain. One study reports reduced frequency and severity of chronic migraine pain over a six month period if the procedure was done twice a week for six weeks (a total of 12 procedures).

For patients, Dr. Wang will create a personalized care plan for you. Because individuals respond differently, Dr. Wang monitors and re-assesses for symptom relief at each visit. Complete SPG block therapy typically requires 6-12 doses, scheduled 2-4x/week, to achieve longer lasting headache or pain relief. Once pain relief has been achieved, a custom maintenance plan is created for you.

Like many other procedures in pain management, the SPG block is likely to work best when combined with a comprehensive treatment plan.