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**THE CENTER FOR PAIN MEDICINE  
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL**

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**EPIDURAL BLOOD PATCH**

***Instruction Sheet for Patients***

*Should I limit my activity or change my diet after the injection?* No. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you may return to your usual activities.

*Are there any side effects caused by a blood patch?* You should call your pain physician if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Redness, swelling, bleeding or discharge from the injection site.

*Are there any restrictions after a blood patch?* Yes. You should follow these restrictions:

- Do not drive for the remainder of the day
- Do not take a tub bath or soak in water (i.e. pool, hot tub) for 24 hours after the procedure
- Allow 3 days post-procedure before resuming physical therapy

*What are the medications used for a blood patch?*

- Lidocaine or bupivacaine are local anesthetics which are used to numb the area of injection; this numbness usually wears off within 2 - 6 hours
- Iopamidol, an x-ray contrast agent is injected into the area to confirm correct placement of the blood sample

*When should I call my doctor?* You should call us immediately if any of the following occur:

- If you experience any swelling, redness, bleeding or discharge from the site of the injection
- If you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- If you experience new or worsening back or neck pain
- If you experience a new numbness or weakness in your arms or legs
- If you experience any chest pain or shortness of breath or persistent cough

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*How can I reach a doctor from the Center?* There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week who can be reached as follows:

- **DURING OFFICE HOURS** (Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm), please call (617) 726-8810 and leave a message for the physician on the nurses' line
- **AFTER HOURS AND ON WEEKENDS**, please call (617-726-2000) and ask the hospital operator to page the physician on call for the MGH Pain Service
- **IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH A PHYSICIAN FROM OUR CENTER** and you are having any of the problems listed above, please go to the nearest Emergency Room and show them this document