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Sympathetic Blocks

The sympathetic nervous system is a network of nerves that run along the front side of the spinal column. One of the functions of this system is controlling blood flow and temperature regulations in the arms and legs. When there is a problem with these nerves regulation can become altered. Symptoms are often felt in the arms, hands, legs, and feet. Symptoms may include pain, burning, feeling cold or tender to the touch in the affected area. Some conditions associated with this altered state are Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. The block is completed by injecting medication around the sympathetic nerves in the neck or low back. If these nerves are causing symptoms some degree of relief should be obtained. A successful block will increase the blood flow to your hand or feet resulting in warmth to this area. Pain will normally be partially to completely relieved while this medication is affecting these nerves if they are the source of the problem. Repeat injections may be necessary for long term relief.