

Intrathecal Baclofen Pump (IBP)

University Neurosurgery Information Sheet

General indications for the procedure:

When the patient cannot tolerate oral medications or when these medications have failed to provide the relief that is needed, a Baclofen pump may be used to deliver a dose of this medication to the spinal fluid so that it gets to the spinal cord as directly as possible in order to treat spasms of the extremities.

Description of the procedure:

Prior to coming to the operating room, the patient will have a spinal tap the day before surgery when some of the medication will be administered as a test dose. If the spasticity improves significantly, then the patient is considered a good candidate and offered the surgery on the day after. The patient is then brought to the operating room where he/she is put to sleep with the help of the anesthesiologist and placed on his/her side. A baclofen pump is a metal device that is connected to the patient's spinal fluid through a small tube (catheter) that runs from a metal device (pump) that is placed under the abdominal skin. This is done via two incisions: one on the abdomen and the other in the small the back.

Risks of the procedure:

The risks include, but are not limited to: spinal headaches for which a blood patch may be required, too much laxity of spasticity, Baclofen overdose with respiratory depression, infection of hardware with need for removal, leak of spinal fluid, kinking of catheter, flip-flop of pump, erosion through skin, disconnection of system, and/or hemorrhage at spine with leg weakness.

Procedure alternatives, if any:

Sometimes other types of oral medications and even botox injections can help control spasms.

Probable consequences of refusing procedure:

If a pump is not placed, and if the other interventions have failed to bring relief, then the spasticity will continue often times becoming painful and even intervening with the activities of daily life and/or nursing care for bed ridden patients.

Person(s) performing the procedure:

The surgical team for this procedure is large. This involves, but is not limited to, the attending surgeons, resident surgeons, surgical nurses, physician assistants, surgical technologists and anesthesiologists. Everyone involved will be performing important tasks related to the surgery in accordance with the hospital policies, and based on their skill set and under the supervision of the responsible practitioners.