Gasserian ganglion nerve block

Introduction
This leaflet provides information about gasserian ganglion nerve blocks, the possible benefits and side effects and what you should do afterwards.

What is a gasserian ganglion nerve block?
This procedure is called a gasserian ganglion block and involves a small amount of local anaesthetic, with or without steroid, being injected onto the part of the nerve supply to the face called the gasserian ganglion. The gasserian ganglion is located to the side of the face, roughly between the ear and eye socket. By injecting local anaesthetic and possibly a steroid onto the gasserian ganglion, the Consultant feels this may help with your facial pain.

Where is it done?
The procedure is carried out in the Chedworth Suite at Cheltenham General Hospital, or in the Orchard Centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. A letter with directions and instructions will be sent to you by the staff at whichever site you are due to attend.

How is it done?
- You will be asked to put on a hospital gown.
- A small needle is put in the back of your hand as a safety precaution.
- You will be asked to lie on the examination table.
- The area to be injected is cleaned with antiseptic.
- The Consultant will numb the area with local anaesthetic before putting the injection of local anaesthetic and possibly a steroid on to the gasserian ganglion.
- X-ray pictures are taken throughout the procedure to help the Consultant direct the needle to the correct place.
- You may experience some discomfort during the procedure, however this is a good sign and helps the Consultant to know he is putting the injection exactly where it is needed.
Sedation is not normally required for this procedure. If you feel very anxious you can discuss this with the Consultant prior to the injection being carried out.

How long will I be in hospital?
Although the procedure itself takes 10 to 15 minutes, you will be given a time to come in for either a morning or afternoon procedure. Due to the way the theatre lists are organised, you may have a substantial wait before your injections are done, so please come prepared for this. After the procedure, you will be offered a drink and a biscuit and allowed home shortly afterwards.

Can I eat and drink?
Please do not have any food 6 hours prior to your appointment time. You may have clear fluids up to 2 hours before your appointment.

For example: If you have a morning appointment at 8:30am, do not have any food, sweets or chewing gum after 2:30am. Drink clear fluids, water, black tea or coffee up until 6:30am. Nothing to eat or drink after 6:30am.

If you have an afternoon appointment at 1:00pm, do not have any food, sweets or chewing gum after 7:00am. Drink clear fluids, water, black tea or coffee up until 11:00am. Nothing to eat or drink after 11:00am.

Diabetics will receive individual instructions and should telephone the pain nurses on Tel: 0300 422 2976 for advice.

Can I take my usual tablets?
Take your usual medication in the morning and bring your medications with you. Patients taking warfarin, clopidogrel or other blood thinning medications and diabetics on medication will be given individual information by the consultant. Please contact the Pain Clinic nurses on Tel: 0300 422 2976, if you need advice.
Can I drive home?
For safety reasons you are asked not to drive on the day of your procedure. You may also need someone with you for the rest of the day in case you feel unwell.

What can go wrong?
- You may experience mild discomfort at the site of the injection; this should last no longer than 48 hours.
- Occasionally you can feel sore or ‘bruised’ for the first day or so until the steroid starts to work.
- Very rarely you may experience some numbness of the tongue or throat which only lasts a few hours. You will be asked to remain in hospital until this is resolved.
- You may experience some numbness of the face. This should last only a few hours.
- There may be a local allergic reaction to the drugs contained in the injection, which results in redness and itching. This is not serious although we need to know for further treatments.
- It is normal to have discomfort at the entry site of the injection for a couple of days. However, if the pain is severe or you feel unwell you should consult your own Doctor (GP) or the Out of Hours service.

Will it work?
The gasserian ganglion block can be very effective but does not work for everyone. They are easily performed and are worth trying.

What happens next?
About 6 weeks after your procedure you will either be asked to telephone our Clinical Nurse Specialists to give a progress report, or your Pain Consultant will give you a form to post back to us. Either way, the next step in your treatment will be decided according to the amount of benefit you have had from the injections and any further appointments will be sent to you in the post. If you are free from pain, you may not be routinely followed up, but may be left with a 6 month open appointment instead.
Contact information

**Pain Clinic**
Tel: 0300 422 2976
Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:00am to 12:00pm
Tuesday, 1:30pm to 4:00pm

An answering machine will be in operation at all other times. For urgent calls please contact your GP or the Out of Hours service.