

**Patient  
Information**

# Peripheral nerve block injection

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about peripheral nerve block injections and how the procedure is carried out.

## What is a peripheral nerve block?

A number of pain conditions are thought to be caused by irritation or entrapment of a peripheral nerve. 'Blocking' the nerve with local anaesthetic can relieve pain and help your doctor to understand what might be causing your pain.

These injections are usually 'diagnostic'; in other words, they may not produce lasting benefit. How your pain responds to a diagnostic injection will have a bearing on how your pain is managed in the future.

## What is injected?

A small amount of local anaesthetic is injected. Sometimes a steroid is added.

The doctor may use ultrasound or an X-ray to help locate the nerve. This can help with accuracy and also reduce any risk when the injection is given.

The steroid acts only around the area where it is injected and there is some evidence that it may help to prolong the effects of the local anaesthetic.

Using a steroid in an injection does not have the same side-effects as taking long-term steroids. It can however affect your blood sugar levels and this may be important if you have diabetes.

## Are there side effects?

The pain may not go away for up to 30 in every 100 patients who are given this injection. Injections targeting a nerve can damage the nerve. We take precautions to reduce this risk but permanent nerve damage may happen in 1 in every 2000 in cases and may result in weakness, numbness or altered sensation, including pain.

Reference No.

**GHPI1584\_09\_20**

Department

**Pain Clinic**

Review due

**September 2023**

## Patient Information

### Where is the procedure done?

The procedure is carried out in the Chedworth Suite at Cheltenham General Hospital. An appointment will be sent to you by the pain clinic secretaries.

### On arrival

- You may be asked to put on a hospital gown.
- You will be asked to lie on an X-ray trolley.
- X-rays images (pictures) may be used to guide the needle. • The area to be injected will be cleaned with antiseptic.
- The consultant will numb the area with local anaesthetic before injecting the anaesthetic and steroid if needed.
- You may feel some discomfort during the procedure. This is a good sign, as it helps the consultant to know the needle is exactly where it is needed.

### How long will I be in hospital?

The procedure will take about 15 to 20 minutes but you may be on Chedworth Suite for a couple of hours, so please come prepared for this. After the procedure, you will be offered a drink and allowed home shortly afterwards.

### Can I eat and drink?

You may eat and drink as normal, unless your consultant advises you otherwise

### Can I take my usual medication?

Continue to take your medication as usual on the treatment day.

**Blood-thinning medication such as Clopidogrel, Apixaban, Rivaroxaban, warfarin etc.** These medicines are usually stopped for a period of time before the injection to reduce the risk of epidural haematoma, which is associated with paralysis. Your consultant should have discussed this with you in clinic but if you have any concerns, please contact your consultant's secretary. You should do this at least one week before your procedure appointment. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

## Patient Information

**If you have diabetes and your blood sugar is above 15mmol/l on the day of your procedure you may not be able to have your injection.** If your blood sugars are above 15 leading up to your injection please contact the consultant's secretary to discuss.

### Can I drive home?

For safety reasons you are asked not to drive yourself home. You should also have somebody with you for the rest of the day.

### After the injection

In the days following your injection you may have:

- **mild discomfort** around the injection site; this is expected and should settle by itself.
- **an increase in your normal pain**, this is usually temporary. You can take your normal pain relief to reduce any discomfort. If the pain is severe, please contact your GP for advice.
- **infection at the injection site**, this happens in up to 1 in every 100 cases and is more common where steroids are used. Please contact your GP for advice.
- **an allergic reaction to the injection**, which results in redness and itching around the injection site. This is not serious, although we need to know about it for future treatments.
- **facial redness or flushing**; this is a normal response to steroid injection treatment.
- **weakness and numbness in the limb or area that was treated.** If it was safe to do so you may have been discharged home with these symptoms. Please take care to protect the area/limb until normal sensation returns. **If normal sensation does not return or the weakness is getting worse, please attend your nearest Emergency Department and show them this leaflet.**

Any dressings can be removed after 24 hours.

**Patient  
Information**

## What happens next?

Your response to the injection treatment will be assessed 6 weeks after the treatment.

### **Please provide your email address before leaving Chedworth Suite.**

A member of our administrative team will email you in 6 weeks with a form to complete about the result of your injection treatment.

You will be asked to complete the form with your name, date of birth, hospital number and the name of your pain consultant.

You will also be asked to let us know how much pain relief was provided by the injection and what improvements you have noticed. The improvements may include being able to sleep better, able to do more physically, reduce medication or improvements in your mood and general wellbeing.

**If you are not able to access email** Please telephone your pain consultant's secretary 6 weeks after the injection treatment. The contact number is at the end of the leaflet. You will be asked for the same information that is requested by email.

The next step in your treatment will be decided according to your response to the injection treatment. Any further appointments will be posted to your home address.

If your pain has improved greatly, you will not need a routine follow up appointment. Instead you will be given a 6 month open appointment during which time you can contact your consultant's secretary should your pain become difficult to manage again.

## Contact information

For injection treatment follow up or to rearrange an appointment please contact your consultant's secretary, Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

### **Dr Young's secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 3198

### **Dr Makins' secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 2558

**Patient  
Information**

**Dr Harper's secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 3198

**Dr Bodycombe's secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 3383

**Dr Rea's secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 2804

**Dr Patel's secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 2558

For all other queries please contact the:

**Clinical Nurse Specialists**

Tel: 0300 422 2976

An answerphone will be in operation at all times, please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

For urgent calls please contact your GP or NHS 111.

**NHS 111**

Tel: 111

**Further information**

For more information about the Gloucestershire Hospitals Pain Management Service please visit the website below:

Website: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/pain/](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/pain/)

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