

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

General information on Injection Treatments

NB. This information sheet provides general information about the above procedure(s) and is not specific to you or your condition. Practice may vary between doctors and for each patient. You should consult your specialist for specific information.

Types of Injections

Pain specialists undertake a variety of different injection treatments (procedures) to both diagnose the source of a pain problem and also to reduce the amount of pain you might feel.

Injections can be around or into joints, around nerves or other structures within the body. It is not usual that these treatments will cure your pain problem permanently. They are more likely to provide pain relief for a period of time that, for some, can be significant.

Commonly, to provide longer lasting pain relief, two procedures are often undertaken. The first is a nerve block to diagnose the source of the pain, the second a radiofrequency procedure to reduce pain signals.

Joint injections and nerve blocks

These injections usually contain local anaesthetic medications similar to those that the dentist uses to numb a tooth. In addition, they may contain a steroid medication with the aim of reducing inflammation and prolonging the effect of the local anaesthetic.

Radiofrequency procedures

These procedures are undertaken with a very fine probe inserted through a needle. Further information is provided in the radiofrequency specific information sheets.

Is this the right treatment for me?

Injections (procedures) are one option for pain management. Other treatment options may exist and these, plus information about the procedure, will be discussed with you by your pain specialist. If you are undecided on the approach, please do not provide consent and undertake your procedure. Further information can be provided.

If your health has changed it is important to let your specialist know, especially if:

- Your medications have changed, particularly if blood thinning medications have been started.
- Your medical conditions have changed, particularly being diagnosed with Diabetes or new allergies have been identified
- You have an infection within the skin or elsewhere in your body.
- Pregnancy status has changed.

What happens during the procedure?

Prior to the procedure your specialist will obtain your written consent. This involves a discussion of the procedure including risks and complications. Only sign your consent when you are ready to proceed.

Your procedure will be undertaken in a hospital or day surgery centre with specifically trained nursing and theatre teams. Imaging is often used (e.g. X-ray or ultrasound) to help guide your specialist during the procedure.

Bring your current medication list in with you for the procedure and continue taking your normal medication. Specific instructions will be provided if you are taking blood thinning medication or diabetic medications.

The majority of procedures are undertaken under sedation, although some procedures can occur without sedation. Rarely a general anaesthetic is required. You will meet an anaesthetist, who will discuss the sedation plan with you. They will usually prepare you for the procedure by measuring observations such as blood pressure, inserting a small needle to administer medications and will attend to you throughout the procedure.

During the procedure the specialist will do your injection, often using an x-ray machine or ultrasound to check the position of the needle. You may feel a pushing or tightness sensation, but if you experience any discomfort you should let your doctor know.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be taken to a recovery or ward area while you are still feeling sleepy and monitored by the nursing staff. You will be advised when to get dressed and when you are safe to go home, usually within a few hours of the procedure. When the local anaesthetic wears off you may feel

some aching or soreness at the injection site. Do not worry if your pain is slightly worse for a few days after the procedure. Your normal pain medications can be taken, unless advised otherwise, and the injection site should be kept clean and dry for 24 hours.

Ensure that follow-up arrangements are in place with your specialist.

Going home and overnight

If your procedure involves sedation or a general anaesthetic you must go home with a supporting adult. This does not include a taxi or uber driver. An adult must be with you overnight. If this is not possible for you, hospital admission can be arranged. If these arrangements are not in place your procedure will be postponed.

In addition, you should not drive, operate machinery, sign legal documents, provide unsupervised childcare or drink alcohol until fit to do so.

You should discuss return to work with your doctor.

Side effects

- Mild soreness or a bruise around the injection site
- Infection is rare. Seek medical help if there is local warmth or redness around the injection site and/or you feel ill and hot.
- Serious complications depend on the procedure and will be discussed at consent
- Your procedure may be ineffective.

What can I expect in the days after the injection?

You can expect some bruising and aching around the injection site. Please keep the area clean and dry for 24 hours. Your pain may initially feel worse after the procedure – this is normal, and you should take painkillers regularly until this settles, as well as your normal medications. Keep moving, although avoid strenuous activity. You can gradually increase your activity as your pain improves. Your specialist can advise further on this.