Local Anaesthetic/Steroid Injection

Nerve Blocks for Pain Management

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Why do damaged nerves cause pain?

After an injury or surgery, scar tissue forms as part of the natural healing process. Sometimes the scar traps a nerve as it heals and causes pain. In some cases a nerve is damaged or bruised because of more direct damage. Whatever the cause, bruising, trauma or entrapment of the nerve, this can result in you feeling pain in the area supplied by the nerve.

What is a nerve block?

A nerve block is the injection of a local anaesthetic agent with or without (+/-) steroid into the area around the nerve. The injection has two functions firstly; local anaesthetic injected into the area around the pain affecting nerve transmission. This allows the nerve transmission system to reset itself. Secondly, if there is any scar tissue, the local anaesthetic will make it expand which will help release any nerve which is trapped.

How effective is it?

For many people these injections produce a noticeable improvement in symptoms but they don’t work for everyone, unfortunately, this cannot be predicted. The effects can last for weeks, months or even years.

Most common side effects include:

• Numbness or tingling in the area injected
• Increase in discomfort for a few days until the steroid begins to work
• A full discussion will take place during consent for treatment regarding potential risks

Where will I have the injection?

The injection will be carried out either in a clinic setting or on the ambulatory care ward. You will be notified accordingly by letter.
What will happen after the injection?
You will be asked to remain in the clinical area for about half an hour after the injection, during which time, the nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse along with the injection site.

When can I go home?
When advised by the nursing staff, you will be able to make arrangements to go home.

Why I must not drive myself home
You would not be covered by your insurance to drive a vehicle for a period of 24 hours following your procedure. This is because you may have a temporary weakness affecting the area injected which may impair your function or ability to drive safely. Therefore, for your own well-being, we advise that you are collected by a relative or friend.

Hospital transport can only be booked if there is a medical need and you meet the criteria.

What pain might I experience after the procedure?
The amount of pain experienced might become worse for a short period of time. This reaction is not dangerous and should pass.
In some cases the area served by the nerve may become weak after the injection. This effect will disappear as the local anaesthetic wears off usually within 4-6 hours.

Back at home
You can remove the dressing from the injection site after 24 hours. If you have any queries in relation to your care please contact the pain service nurses on: 0121 371 5105 (voicemail), or nurse-led appointment enquiries on 0121 371 5110.

For general enquiries or appointments, please contact the secretaries on 0121 371 5100.
Important information

Please inform the department on 0121 371 5100 if you have been newly prescribed anticoagulants (blood thinning medication), if you have a cold or persistent cough, are taking a course of antibiotics or there has been any significant change in your overall health as this may affect your procedure. Failure to do so may result in your procedure being cancelled on the day.

Medication

• Please take all your prescribed medication as normal prior to your procedure unless you have been otherwise advised
• Please bring a list of all your current medication when you attend for your procedure

Can I eat before coming in?

You can eat and drink normally before arriving in the department.

If you are diabetic, please bring along your Insulin, normal snacks and glucose tablets (if appropriate).

The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk or call 0121 627 7803