Information for patients
Caudal Epidural Injections

Pain Management Services
What is a caudal epidural injection?

A caudal epidural is an injection into the base of the spine, using a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid. It is thought to have three beneficial effects:

- A physical action, increasing the space around compressed nerves
- Local anaesthetics numb the nerves for a period of hours, giving short term pain relief.
- The steroid has a long term effect reducing inflammation around the nerves.

There are only minimal effects on the rest of the body using steroids by this route of administration. Any side effects are most likely to occur if steroids are given frequently over a short period of time, for example raised blood pressure. Diabetics may experience short-term problems with blood sugar level control.

If the epidural is helpful it may be repeated at the discretion of your pain consultant.

What does it involve?

You will be asked to lie on your front for this procedure, which usually takes 10-15 minutes. Your back will be cleansed with antiseptic solution and drapes placed over you to prevent infection.

Your skin is then numbed with Local anaesthetic, once this has taken effect a fine needle is passed into the epidural space (see diagram).

The needle does not need to be deep as this area is just below the skin.

The procedure is performed using x-ray guidance. Once the needle is confirmed to be in the correct position, the injection will be given.

What is injected?

- A small amount of dye this is used to confirm that the injection is in the correct position (which will be seen on the x-ray image).
- Local Anaesthetic. This is injected into the epidural space.
- Steroid - is injected into the epidural space.
**What are the side effects and risks?**

**Due to the procedure:**
Infection is very rare as this procedure is performed in theatre under aseptic technique.
You may be more uncomfortable for a few days after the procedure.
You may have bruising from the injection site.
You make have a headache.
You may have an allergic reaction to the injected medication.

**Due to the steroid injection**
You may experience facial flushing for a few days.
For females - they may be a temporary alteration to you menstrual cycle.
If you are a diabetic they may be a temporary increase in your blood sugar levels.

**After your injections**
Continue to take your pain medication until you notice an improvement in your symptoms.

Take it easy for the rest of the day. Do not over exert your self or do heavy work for the first few days.

Remove the dressing the following day.

**What if I have further questions?**

**Before treatment** - you should ask your doctor before you sign the consent form.

**After treatment** - (at home) if you have any questions, worries or concerns please contact menzies unit and ask for Jan Gilchrist chronic pain nurse specialist on 01691404337 or 404298

**Urgent calls** - after day surgery should be directed to accident and emergency department or to your own G.P.
There are many benefits in stopping smoking before your surgery. These include:

- The risk of anaesthetic complications, such as breathing problems and chest infections are reduced.
- Wounds may heal more quickly.
- Smoker’s bones, muscles and tendons can be slower to grow and repair.
- Risk of blood clots (DVT) is reduced.
- Your hospital stay may be shorter.

The sooner you give up smoking before your operation the greater the benefits.

Research shows that you are four times more likely to succeed in quitting completely with help and support.

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