

Information for patients

X-ray or CT guided pain block injection



Radiology

About your X-ray or CT guided pain block injection

Pain block injections involve the use of x rays to guide the injection of either local anaesthetic or a steroid into a specific area of the body. Pain block injections aim too either:

1. Help identify the exact joint or part of the body causing pain (local anaesthetic)
2. Provide pain relief and treat a painful joint or part of the body (steroid)

Depending on what your consultant has requested will affect which medicines are used, and often we use a combination of both steroid and local anaesthetic.

What happens during the procedure?

A Radiologist will do the injection using guidance from a CT scanner or X-ray machine. Depending on the area to be injected, you may need to change into a hospital gown/scrubs. You can bring your own dressing gown to wear while waiting if you wish.

Usually, a Radiologist, Radiographer and a nurse or nursing assistant will be in the room. They will explain the procedure and make sure you are happy to continue. You will be positioned on the bed, and we will help you get as comfortable as possible. It is important to stay still during the procedure. The Radiologist will clean the skin and use sterile equipment to lower the risk of infection. A local anaesthetic may be injected to numb the area. This may sting for a short time. A needle is then placed into the area. A contrast agent (a fluid that shows up on X-ray) may be used to check the needle is in the right place. When the Radiologist is sure the needle is correct, they will inject either local anaesthetic, steroid, or both.

The procedure can be uncomfortable, but we will do everything we can to complete it quickly. After the examination, a small dressing will be applied.

How do I prepare?

Follow the instructions on your appointment letter. You may eat and drink normally.

Call us on [01691 404457](tel:01691404457) as soon as possible if any of these apply to you:

- You take medicine to thin your blood (anti-coagulants) such as Warfarin, Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban or similar
- You are taking antibiotics or think you have an infection
- You have allergies
- Your usual pain has gone away before the appointment
- You are or might be pregnant
- You cannot arrange for someone to drive you home

Benefits

The injection may help reduce pain and it also helps doctors decide what treatment you may need next.

Risks

Possible side effects include:

- Pain or discomfort for a few days (you can take paracetamol)
- Worsening pain or inflammation – can be permanent
- Bruising or bleeding
- Infection

Steroid side effects can include:

- Flushing of the face for a few hours
- A small loss of fat where the injection was given (this may cause dimples and can be permanent)
- Paler skin around the area (maybe permanent)
- If you have diabetes, your blood sugar may rise for a few days
- If you have high blood pressure, it may rise for a few days
- Rapid progression of arthritis – a rare complication

X-rays carry a small risk of causing cancer many years later. Your examination only adds a very small amount to your lifetime risk.

After the procedure

We will normally take you to a recovery room straight after the procedure. Please bring someone to take you home, as you might not be able to drive. We will ask you to keep track of your pain and call us on a set date to tell us how you feel. This helps the doctor write a report.

Your results will be sent to the clinician who referred you for the examination and they will be in touch with you to discuss the results

If you experience any of the following symptoms within a few days of the procedure, please contact us on the number below or go directly to your GP for advice:

- Increased pain
- A raised temperature
- Excessive bleeding from the injection site

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

Call our booking team on **01691 404457**

Further information:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/steroid-injections

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/medical-radiation-patient-doses/
patient-dose-information-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medical-radiation-patient-doses/patient-dose-information-guidance)

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

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