

Pulsed radiofrequency

This is a treatment used to help people with long-term pain. A special machine called a radiofrequency machine which sends out a pulsed electrical current is applied to the affected nerves. This may reduce the feeling of pain.

Where will I have the treatment?

This will be carried out under x-ray control. Please make sure that you have someone to take you home afterwards or your treatment will be cancelled.

What does the treatment involve?

You will be asked to lie or sit on a hospital trolley:

- a cannula (small plastic tube) may be inserted into a vein on the back of your hand, and you may be given a little medication to help you relax
- local anaesthetic will be injected into your skin and a hollow needle inserted alongside the affected nerve
- a very fine wire will be passed down the needle and the other end attached to radiofrequency machine
- you will be asked to say when you feel a tingling or twitching sensation, as the doctor sets the machine to the correct setting for you
- the machine will be set to pulse for up to three minutes, you may be aware of the pulsing or have a warm feeling in the area being treated.

This process may need repeating at various pain sites.

Continued overleaf..

Are there any risks?

- The procedure may fail because it is too difficult to locate the affected area, or because the treatment fails to help your pain.
- The affected nerve may be injured and pain or weakness may occur. This usually gets better.
- Your pain may get worse. However, this is less likely than your pain getting better.

What happens afterwards?

After your treatment, you:

- may have some small plasters on the treated sites. These can be removed when you get home
- will be observed for a short time in the recovery area
- may have some numbness, heaviness or pins and needles. This is normal and will wear off in time
- will usually be able to go home within one to two hours.

When you get home, continue to take your usual painkillers unless advised otherwise by your consultant.

Will I need another appointment?

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you.

Further information

If you have any questions, please ask the staff in the Pain Clinic or telephone: 01872 252792.

For more information and alternative treatments visit:
www.painclinic.org/treatment-nerveblocks

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690