

# Suprascapular nerve injection

Information for Pain Clinic patients



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



## Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients considering having a suprascapular nerve injection. The suprascapular nerve helps transmit pain from the shoulder joint, and blocking the nerve with an injection may help with chronic shoulder pain.

## What happens if I decide to have an injection?

The injection will be performed in hospital. You will need someone to collect you as should not drive following this treatment. The procedure itself takes approximately 10 -15 minutes but you may spend around two hours in hospital from admission to discharge.

## What does it involve?

Usually an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid is given around where the nerve passes across your shoulder blade. You will be asked whether you:

- are allergic to anything eg local anaesthetic, steroids, iodine or plasters
- have any other serious medical conditions
- have been taking antibiotics for an infection
- you feel unwell on the day
- are taking any medicines that thin the blood – these include Warfarin, aspirin, Clopidogrel, or Apixaban.

You may feel the needle going through the skin. In most cases the doctor will use local anaesthetic, which will numb the area for injection.

## What happens afterwards?

Usually we like to make sure you are feeling OK for half an hour after the injection, before we let you go home.

## Are there any risks or complications?

- The injection may not work, and is only likely to provide temporary relief. If it does work it may last for hours up to months in some people.
- The risks of using steroid medications are included in a separate patient leaflet.

- Other risks include feeling dizzy, an allergic reaction to the medications used and bleeding, but these are infrequent.
- One very rare complication is a punctured lung (pneumothorax).

**You must not drive following this procedure – you must have someone to take you home.**

## What happens afterwards?

Your pain will usually improve in the first few hours as an effect of the local anaesthetic. Your pain may return after the local anaesthetic has worn off, and you may feel a bit sore around the area of injection.

The steroid can take up to two weeks to take effect, or may not work at all. Everyone responds differently, so we won't know until after you have had the procedure.

## When can I resume normal activities?

On the day of treatment, when you go home you can continue as normal as long as you feel well enough. You can drive on the following day.

If you feel benefit from the injection you can slowly increase your level of activity and undertake any specific exercise you may have been given previously. You may also take the opportunity to reduce the amount of painkillers that you take.

## Will I need any follow up?

You will be given a follow up appointment to attend a clinic appointment with your consultant/ doctor or may be offered a telephone review with one of the specialist nurses on behalf of your consultant.

## Any questions?

Our contact details for any queries are: 01872 252160 or 252792.

Please remember in the first instance your GP is the first place of contact.