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# Nerve Root Block Injections

Issued by the Orthopaedic Department



**This leaflet tells you about having a nerve root injection, what it is, and what to expect. Please read it thoroughly.**

## **Why am I having a nerve root block injection?**

You have been given an appointment to have an injection called a nerve root block. You may be experiencing pain in one or both of your legs. This may be caused by irritation, inflammation or compression of one or more nerves in your lumbar spine.

This injection can reduce inflammation and provide pain relief. It will also help to clarify where your leg pain is coming from.

**If you are no longer experiencing leg pain or if your symptoms have resolved please contact us to discuss if you still need to attend your appointment.**

If you become ill, or cannot keep your appointment for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible.

## **How should I prepare for my appointment?**

- You will be having a local anaesthetic so you can eat and drink as normal.
- Please have a bath or shower the morning of your appointment.
- Bring your usual medications as well as a list of all medicines.
- Bring something to read.
- Remove all of your jewellery, except your wedding band.
- Keep makeup to a minimum.
- We advise you not to bring any valuables.
- Arrange for a responsible adult to escort you home from the unit.

- You will not be able to drive immediately after the procedure and you must not use public transport without having someone with you.
- Be prepared to spend two to five hours in the unit on the day and please be aware your appointment/arrival time is not your procedure time.
- If you take any blood thinning medication other than Aspirin, which we have not already discussed with you, please contact the relevant secretary as soon as possible.

## **Are there any risks?**

There are few risks associated with nerve root block injections, however, as with all procedures there are some. These may include:

- Some patients find the injections uncomfortable. This is a temporary problem.
- Rare risks include allergic reaction to the medication used, very rarely injury to the nerves or coating around the nerves, infection and bleeding.
- It is important to tell us if you are a diabetic, as the steroid solution which is part of the injection can affect your blood sugar levels.
- If you notice redness or swelling around the injection site, or if you develop a high temperature please contact us or your GP.

## **What will happen at my appointment?**

### **When you arrive**

- A receptionist will book you in.
- A nurse will show you to your changing area where you will be asked to put on a theatre gown.
- A nurse will perform basic health checks and discuss your treatment.

- The surgeon will discuss the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form (unless already signed in clinic) and a pen mark will be used to mark the area for your nerve block.

## **Going into theatre**

- A theatre nurse will go over your details, and then walk through into theatre with you.
- In the theatre you will see several medical staff and lots of equipment.
- You will be asked to lie on your stomach for five to ten minutes.
- The surgeon will point to the area marked and the X-ray machine will be positioned over you.
- Your skin will be cleaned using antiseptic solution.
- The injection will be given after injecting local anaesthetic in to your skin. You may feel a burning sensation going down your leg during and after the injection, this is normal.

## **After your injection**

- You will come out of theatre on your bed or trolley.
- You will be asked to stay on you bed for 15 to 30 minutes.
- Do not get out of bed until nursing staff are with you as your leg may feel weak.
- You will be offered a hot drink.

## **Going home**

- The surgeon will see you after the operating list is finished. After the injection if all is well you will be allowed home.

- Before going home arrangements will be made for any further appointments, normally this will be in two to three months time.
- You will be given a pain diary to complete and take with you to your next appointment.
- You should continue to take any prescribed pain killers, unless your surgeon has advised you to stop them.
- You will be given a letter for your GP.
- Normally you can return to work within a few days.

## Useful telephone numbers

If you need to discuss your appointment please contact your consultant, their details will be on your appointment letter.

If you need to speak to someone on the day of your appointment please contact the day unit where you are due to attend:

Alnwick Hospital	(01665) 626791
Hexham Hospital	(01434) 655316
North Tyneside General Hospital	(0191) 293 2548
Wansbeck General Hospital	(01670) 564169 or (01670) 564170







## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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