

## Patient information

# Computerised Tomography CT Guided Nerve Root Epidural Injections

## Radiology Department

### Introduction

This leaflet tells you about the procedure known as CT guided nerve root or epidural injections, explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your consultant or family doctor (GP), but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

You will have a chance to ask questions and you should have had sufficient explanation before your injection.

### What is a nerve root or epidural injection?

Steroid can be injected around nerves or epidural space (space around the spinal cord). This is done through the skin using CT to guide the needle placement. A contrast dye containing iodine may be used to confirm correct needle position.

### Why do I need it?

Your doctor referred you for a nerve root or epidural steroid injection, which may help reduce your pain or help the doctor determine the cause of your symptoms.

### Important

If you are on anticoagulation (medication to thin your blood) - please discuss with your referrer regarding if any action that may need to be taken.

After the injection your leg may feel heavy, numb, or weak – **you must not drive home**. Please arrange for transport home.

**If you have any allergies, you must let your Consultant and the Radiologist know.**

### How is the procedure done?

The procedure will take place in the X-ray department. You will lie on the procedure table in a suitable position.

The radiologist will decide on the most suitable point for performing the injection.

The radiologist will keep everything sterile, your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic, and a sterile drape will be placed on you.

The radiologist will inject local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) into your skin, this may sting initially but it will numb the area quickly. You may be able to feel touch and pressure during the procedure, but you should not feel sharp pain.

If you do feel sharp pain, let the radiologist know and more local anaesthetic can be given.

When the needle is close to the nerve, occasionally you may feel an exacerbation of your usual back pain or shooting pain down your leg - both are temporary.

After the procedure, a sterile dressing will be applied over the injection site.

### **What are the risks?**

If you are on anticoagulants (medication to thin the blood like warfarin, clopidogrel or aspirin) the small risk of bleeding into the epidural space is slightly raised.

There is a very small risk of damage to the nerve.

There is minimal theoretical risk of infection, but the procedure is done with a sterile technique.

There is a very small risk that the local anaesthetic used may occasionally cause side effects such as blurred vision, dizziness, or drowsiness but the amount used is very small.

If you are getting an injection into your hip or back, your leg may feel heavy, numb, or weak – you must not drive home after the procedure, please arrange for transport home. This should improve as the local anaesthetic wears off.

If you are unwell or prefer to defer your injection, please contact the Imaging department on Tel: 0151 706 2730 and let your consultant or GP know.

### **After the procedure**

**You must not drive home after the injection – please arrange for transport home.**

It is normal to have discomfort for up to two days, you may take over the counter painkillers such as paracetamol.

If you feel unwell, have fever and chills, skin changes or severe pain after the injection despite taking painkillers, please see your doctor or ring the telephone numbers below for advice. Out of hours please contact your doctors (GP) surgery or NHS 111.

**If the pain is severe and you have been unable to obtain advice from your GP or NHS 111 please attend your nearest Emergency Department (A&E Dept).**

You may keep a pain diary to record your pain relief and activity levels. This may help your consultant or GP decide on further treatment.

## Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further information

**For any further information please contact the radiology department of the hospital you will attend**

### Radiology Department

**Royal Liverpool Hospital**

**Tel: 0151 706 2730**

**Aintree Hospital**

**Tel: 0151 529 8988**

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