

## Patient information

### **Popliteal Sciatic Nerve Catheter**

Department of Anaesthesia

Aintree Hospital

#### **What is a Popliteal Sciatic Nerve Catheter?**

A **popliteal sciatic nerve catheter** is a thin, flexible tube placed near the **sciatic nerve** behind your knee (in the “popliteal” area). It delivers local anaesthetic (numbing medication) continuously to help **relieve pain** in the lower leg, ankle, or foot.

#### **Why Am I Being Offered This?**

You may be experiencing significant pain in your lower leg or foot due to ischaemia (reduced blood supply), after surgery or from an injury.

This catheter is offered to provide:

- Strong targeted pain relief
- Reduce the need for strong oral or intravenous pain killers
- Improve comfort before a planned procedure and allow you to raise the affected leg to improve any oedema (swelling from fluid) which in turn helps healing after the procedure

#### **How is the procedure performed?**

The procedure is performed by an Anaesthetist who will discuss the details with you and ask you to sign a consent form.

#### **Here is what to expect during the procure:**

1. You'll lie on your front or side.
2. The skin behind your knee will be cleaned and numbed with local anaesthetic.
3. A needle is used to find the sciatic nerve using ultrasound.
4. A soft plastic catheter is inserted and secured with a dressing.
5. It connects to a small pump that delivers pain relief continuously.
6. The catheter will usually stay in place for up to 5 days before being removed

### **What are the potential risks or side effects?**

- Difficulty inserting the catheter
- Temporary numbness or weakness in the foot or leg (this is expected)
- Risk of falling — **you must not walk unaided** while the catheter is in
- Mild bruising or bleeding at the insertion site
- Infection (rare)
- Nerve injury
  - Most injuries are temporary with recovery in days to weeks
  - 1 in 2000-5000 may experience permanent injury
- Catheter dislodgement or pump issues
- Allergy to the local anaesthetic or systemic toxicity (rare)

### **What are the alternatives?**

The alternatives are oral or intravenous pain medicines which it is likely you are already taking and have their own side effects. A single shot nerve block (no catheter) is also sometimes an option; this has the same risks and lasts around 6-24 hours.

More information about peripheral nerve blocks can be found from the Royal College of Anaesthetists at:

<https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients/patient-information-resources/patient-information-leaflets-video-resources/peripheral-nerve-blocks>

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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 further information please contact the anaesthetic department on number below**

**Telephone number: 0151 525 5980**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 525 5980**

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