

# Epidural injection

## Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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## Epidural injection

The aim of this procedure is to lessen the experience of pain. Time in the pain management clinic is available for you to discuss possible options available with the doctor providing this treatment.

Potential risks are listed on the consent form for your information so that you may read and understand the treatment you are about to receive.

## What is an epidural injection?

This is an injection delivered directly into the epidural space. The epidural space runs the length of the spine; it surrounds the spinal cord.

Nerves cross this space from the spinal cord to various parts of the body. Injury, arthritic changes or general 'wear and tear' of vertebra can cause pain to be experienced if the nerve is compressed or disturbed in any way.

The site of the injection will depend on where you experience most of your pain. The doctor will discuss this with you.

On the day of your injection, you and your doctor will sign the consent form together to document your consent to proceed with the procedure.

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussions during your clinical consultation. If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment or contact the people below.

## Contact details

### Chronic pain management

Monday to Wednesday  
01704 704 201.

Wednesday to Friday  
01695 656 421.

### Waiting list office

01695 656 670.

### Specialist nurse and pain nurses

01704 705 132.

## Headaches

It is rare, but you can develop a post procedure headache. This can occur when the spinal needle unintentionally punctures the outer covering of the spinal cord which causes some leakage of the spinal fluid (CSF). This headache can be eased by lying flat and drinking caffeinated drinks. If you develop a headache post procedure which does not settle please contact the hospital pain service for further advice.

## Injection site tenderness

You may experience some injection site tenderness and increased pain for a few days or hours after injection. This generally settles on its own.

## Alternative treatment options

If you decide not to have the procedure your alternative option is to continue to manage your pain conservatively.

This can be assisted with physiotherapy and referral to a pain management programme if suitable.

In some cases if appropriate and clinically indicated, you may choose to proceed with surgery instead.

The aims benefits and alternatives to an epidural injection have been outlined within the leaflet. If you decide you do not wish to go ahead with your planned procedure, please contact the waiting list office on 01695 656 670 to inform them of your decision as soon as possible.

## What to expect

This procedure is carried out in an appropriate treatment area. This procedure can be carried out under x-ray. You may be asked to sit or lie face down on the table for the procedure.

An injection of local anaesthetic will be injected first to numb the area, then you will feel a pushing sensation as the epidural needle is moved into the epidural space

When everything is correctly placed, a solution of local anaesthetic and a slow release steroid preparation will be injected.

The steroid preparation will remain in your system for up to 12 weeks. Sometimes patients can experience pain relief for longer than this.

In some cases however, patients can experience no pain relief at all. There may be some slight discomfort at the time of injection but this will not last long. It is safe to take your normal medication on this day and eat breakfast before attending the hospital unless instructed otherwise.

Anticoagulation medications should be stopped before the procedure as instructed by your doctor. Please contact us if necessary to discuss.

Please ensure you do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure.

## Preparing to come into hospital

Please read your appointment card carefully as this will tell you the clinic area and the hospital site you must attend for this procedure.

## Medication

It is important you get the right information about what medication to stop before your procedure. If you are taking any antiplatelet or anticoagulation medication for example:

- Clopidogrel.
- Prasugrel.
- Ticagrelor.
- Warfarin.
- Apixaban.
- Dabigatran.
- Rivaroxaban.
- Edoxaban.

Please contact the waiting list office on 01695 656 670 to inform them before attending for the procedure. They will give you guidance on how long these must be stopped before the injection.

If you are taking the medication following a stroke, heart attack, cardiac stent, coronary artery bypass graft or recent heart attack do not stop this medication without advice from your pain doctor.

## Risks/side effects

All steroid injections can cause a short term reduction in the function of the immune system along with possible facial flushing, short term menstrual irregularity in females and altered blood sugar levels in diabetic patients. Further information on the risks can be found in the consent form.

## Infection

There is a small chance of wound infection or the potential for deeper spinal infection. We do take every measure to avoid this and procedures are conducted in a theatre environment to reduce risk.

## Bleeding

Rarely you may get some bleeding and or bruising around the injection site which will usually settle after a few days.

## Nerve injury

There is the rare potential for a nerve injury. This can happen if the needle comes into contact with a nerve or nerve sheath.

This may cause some numbness and weakness affecting the limbs. This is generally temporary whilst the local anesthetic wears off.