

# Fluoroscopy-guided lumbar nerve root injection

## Patient Information

This information leaflet is for patients who are going to have a fluoroscopy-guided lumbar nerve root injection. It has been prepared to give you a greater understanding of what the procedure involves. It may not answer all of your questions and if you do have any concerns, please do not hesitate to ask.

## What is a fluoroscopy-guided lumbar nerve root injection?

A nerve root injection is an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid (anti-inflammatory) medication around a nerve in the lower back as it leaves the spine under X-ray guidance.

## Why have I been referred for this?

Your specialist thinks that the symptoms in your lower back and/or leg are due to irritation of a nerve by a damaged disc or bony spur. The aim of the injection is to establish if this nerve is the source of your symptoms and to relieve those symptoms by reducing inflammation around the nerve.

## The procedure:

- The procedure is performed under X-ray guidance by a specialist consultant radiologist.
- It is performed as an outpatient which means you will be asked to arrive shortly before the procedure and allowed home 15 minutes after it has finished. You should expect to be in the hospital for 30-60 minutes.
- You should not drive after the procedure and are advised to bring someone with you.

## In the department please report to x-ray reception:

- On arrival in the X-ray Department, you will be directed to the fluoroscopy room (Rooms 4 & 5). You will be met by a radiographer and asked to change into a gown in a cubicle.
- The consultant will see you before you enter the scanning room to confirm you have read this leaflet and understand it. He/she will explain the procedure and answer any questions you have.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- The procedure is performed without general anaesthesia and without sedation. Local anaesthetic may be used.
- You will be asked to lie face-down on a couch which will move. The X-ray tube will also move around you. The consultant radiologist will remain with you throughout the procedure which will last 5-10 minutes.

- The skin will be marked and cleaned with antiseptic solution, which feels cold.
- The radiologist will direct a fine needle towards the specific nerve and will then inject a small amount of x-ray contrast (dye) to confirm an appropriate position before injecting a small amount of local anaesthetic and steroid.
- After removal of the needle, a dry dressing will be placed over the puncture site.

### **After the procedure:**

- You will be asked to change back into your clothes.
- You may feel weakness and/or numbness in your leg. This may develop an hour or so after the procedure and last for several hours. This is quite common.
- You should not drive for 24 hours after the injection as your insurance may not be valid if you are involved in an accident.
- The dressing can be removed the morning after the procedure and then you can wet the area. No dressing is needed after this.
- Gentle physical activity is advised for 24-48 hours after the procedure. If your job is physical, up to 5 days of gentle activity is advisable. If your job is desk-based, you can return to work within 48 hours.
- It may take up to 6 weeks to see the full benefit of the procedure.
- It is important to understand that as your symptoms improve you need to follow the exercise programme advised by the physiotherapist and other instructions regarding caring for your back.

### **Are there any risks?**

- The injection/s may not provide the expected/desired relief of symptoms. Unfortunately, this will not become apparent until after the procedure.
- There are very few risks with this procedure. Some patients find the injections uncomfortable or find their symptoms worsen for a few days.
- Other rare risks are:
  - Infection.
  - Bleeding around the nerve causing pressure on the nerve (1 in 50 000).
  - Nerve injury (1 in 20 000).

### **Who should I contact if I have a problem or question?**

If you have any questions regarding the reasons for this procedure, please contact the Spinal Diagnostics Service on 01923 844 857/ 01923 844 987.

## What should I do in case of an emergency?

If you have any queries after the procedure, please contact the X-ray Department on 01895 279 864 or the Spinal Diagnostics Service.

## Languages/ Alternative Formats

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format.  
Please contact: 01895 279973

**Fadlan waydii haddii aad warbixintan ku rabto luqad ama hab kale. Fadlan la xidhiidh 01895 279 973**

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Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem informacji pacjenta (patient information) pod numerem telefonu: 01895 279973.

如果你需要這些資料的其他語言版本、大字体、或音頻格式，請致電01895 279 973 查詢。

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