

Pain Service

Suprascapular Nerve Block Injection

Why am I having this injection?

Your Consultant has requested this injection for its beneficial effects in reducing pain for patients with shoulder pain or pain arising from your neck. Shoulder pain may be caused by inflammation of the suprascapular nerve which runs along the back of your shoulder.

What is a suprascapular nerve block?

A suprascapular nerve block is a mixture of a slow release steroid and/or local anaesthetic injected near the suprascapular nerve.

How does the injection work?

The purpose of the injection is twofold: to diagnose whether or not the suprascapular nerve is involved in causing your pain and to provide pain relief. A suprascapular nerve block is not a cure all for your pain but is used to help reduce some of the symptoms you are experiencing.

The injection can help to relieve pain for several hours, weeks, months or possibly longer. We hope you will get a period of pain relief that will enable you to strengthen the muscles in your shoulders by doing exercises. In some cases this injection can be repeated.

Before you have the injection please inform the clinic if:

- You have diabetes.
- You are/may be pregnant.
- Taking any drugs to thin your blood

e.g. Acenocoumarol (Sinthrome), Aspirin, Apixaban, Clopidogrel, Dabigatran etexilate, Dipyridamole, Phenindione, Prasugrel, Rivaroxaban, Ticagrelor, Tirofiban, Warfarin – please inform the clinic at least a week before your injection as we will need to discuss arrangements regarding your treatment.

Please do not stop taking the drug without being advised by the clinic.

How is the injection performed?

The injection will take place in the Pain Clinic at Calderdale.

After admission you will be asked to change into a theatre gown. Please bring your own dressing gown and slippers. A doctor will see you before the injection to explain the procedure, including possible complications and side effects. The doctor will also answer any questions you may have.

You will be asked to lie flat on your stomach or sit up. The area to be injected will be cleaned using antiseptic. Your Consultant may use X-ray or ultrasound to guide the needle. The Consultant will numb the area with local anaesthetic before doing the nerve block. You may experience some discomfort, although this is short lived.

An injection of local anaesthetic and steroids around the area of the trapped nerves may reduce the pain. The steroid used is prescribed and given "off licence" (meaning it is used outside its prescribed terms of use). However, this medication is given by the Pain Consultant and has been widely used in pain practice across the globe for over twenty years but as with any medicine patients can experience side-effects.

The local anaesthetic works by numbing the nerves and has a short term effect. The steroids reduce the inflammation in the area and can take up to 4 weeks to start working to give longer term relief.

Side-effects - most of which can happen after any injection of any sort

You may experience some numbness or weakness in your arms for a few hours following the injection. This will wear off.

- In patients with diabetes the steroids may temporarily raise blood sugar levels.
- As with any injection there is a very slight chance of getting an infection where the needle is placed. Every effort is made to avoid this by using a sterile technique.
- The injection may take up to 6 weeks to relieve your pain and for some people it may not help at all
- Your pain may be worse for a few days. In some cases this can take up to 2 weeks to return to normal levels.
- There is a risk of bleeding or bruising, particularly if you take medication to thin your blood.
- Unfortunately, no injection is without risk. In a very small number of patients, there is a risk of damage to nerves in the area of the injection and, very rarely, a permanent increase in pain.
- Facial flushing which is a side effect of the steroid.
- Visual disturbances which is a side effect from the steroid.

If you feel short of breath after discharge you **MUST** return to your local Hospital Emergency Department immediately and inform the Emergency Department Doctor that you have had an a Suprascapular nerve block injection. You will need a chest x-ray and sometimes, but not often, a chest drain may need to be inserted. This will all be explained at the time.

Please seek prompt medical attention if you have any **new** visual disturbances such as your sight becoming blurry or distorted or you having difficulty with bright lights as left untreated could affect the vision in your eyes.

After the Injection

After the injection has finished you will be asked to rate your pain again. You will remain under observation for approximately thirty minutes to check your blood pressure and pulse is stable. You will be given something to drink. When you feel ready you will be asked to get dressed and then allowed to go home.

Please ensure a friend or relative is available to take you home and stay with you for the next 24 hours.

You will be closely observed by a qualified nurse after the injection with a doctor available for immediate assistance if required.

Driving

As you will be unable to drive home you will need a responsible adult to accompany you and to look after you after the injection. You will not be able to drive for 24 hours until you can perform an emergency stop with ease. Above all, do not drive yourself if you can't move your arm properly!

Work

Do not return to work immediately, rest for 24 hours and then slowly start to increase your activity. Be mindful if you have a numb arm/hands/fingers you may not feel pain/sharpness/temperature/pressure properly. While numb, we recommend resting your arm and being mindful of the limb position (changing it regularly) and avoiding sharp/hot objects getting close to you as you may not be able to feel them.

Pain Medication

Please continue to take your regular pain medication after your injection. If your pain improves you may be able to decrease your regular pain medication. Please do not stop any medication without seeking medical advice.

What next?

The treatment is part of a holistic approach to your ongoing pain management; if you need help with pacing every day activities or setting goals/action plans please contact one of the team who will happily provide you with information.

Before you see the doctor or nurse after your injection, please think about how you have benefited from this treatment, some ideas:

- Can I use my arm/ shoulder better than before?
- Am I taking less pain medication?
- Am I more active?
- Is my pain reduced – if so by how much?
- What else can I do to self-manage my pain?

References:

Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust Pain Clinic (2019) **Suprascapular nerve block injection**
Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust

Isle of Wight NHS Trust (2013) **Advice following a suprascapular nerve block for chronic shoulder pain relief** Isle of Wight NHS Trust

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (2017) **Corticosteroids: rare risk of central serous chorioretinopathy with local as well as systemic administration** Drug Safety Update volume 11 issue 1, August 2017: 2.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

The Pain Clinic
Monday to Friday
9am - 5pm (Excluding Bank Holidays)

Telephone No: 01422 224085

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਚ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم
المذكور أعلاه"