Cervical nerve root injection

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET INT08 (SEDATION)

Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Duration of examination

Examination time will be approximately 45 minutes plus post-procedure care.

Please bring with you:

- Your request form
- Medicare and any
- Healthcare cards

Payment on the day of the examination is requested.

For more information regarding Benson Radiology please visit:

bensonradiology.com.au

What is a nerve root injection?

Nerve roots are the parts of the nerves which emerge from the spinal cord. Conditions such as prolapsed discs can cause inflammation and irritation of the nerve roots. This may result in considerable pain in the spine and along the nerve into the arms.

The injection used for this procedure is a steroid (anti-inflammatory) medication. Local anaesthetic may also be used. The injection is intended to relieve pain by decreasing inflammation associated with the irritated nerve.

Patient preparation

You will need to fast for six hours prior to the procedure.

Please inform us if you are taking any blood-thinning medication (i.e. Aspirin, Warfarin, Dabigatran or Clopidogrel) or if you have any allergies. You may need to have a blood clotting test before the procedure and have your medication adjusted by your doctor.

Please advise the radiographer if you are or think you may be pregnant.

Sedation

An anaesthetist will perform the twilight sedation. Please note this is not a general anaesthetic and you will still be awake during the procedure. The anaesthetist will use the appropriate amount of sedative and monitor you throughout the duration of the procedure.

What will happen during the examination?

You will be asked to change into a gown and to lie on the CT examination table. Your skin will be cleansed around the area of interest to create sterile conditions. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin. CT imaging is used to accurately locate the area to be injected and to guide the needle. It is important you keep as still as possible during the procedure.

A radiologist will then use CT imaging to guide the needle into position near the nerve root and inject the steroid and local anaesthetic solution. The needle is removed and a sterile dressing applied.

For some people, due to increased pressure, injection of fluid into the nerve root canal can be uncomfortable. You may experience pain radiating into your arm whilst this happens.

Are there any risks?

There is a small risk (1 in 20,000) of nerve injury at the level of the needle.

Rarely, blood vessels close to the nerve root can be damaged by the needle. This can cause a collection of blood, which can create pressure on the nerve or spinal cord. If this occurs it may need active treatment to correct. Infection rarely occurs.

Very rarely, arteries supplying the base of the brain or spinal cord can be injured, which can lead to transient or permanent injury (stroke) with paralysis or, even more rarely, death.

Complications such as infection, allergy, bleeding are considered to be very rare.

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Post examination care

Following the procedure you may feel some slight grogginess. You will be kept for observation until you are cleared by a nurse and feel comfortable to leave.

You are required to have someone with you to drive you home and stay with you overnight.

Please allow up to four hours for the procedure.

Effects from the treatment

The local anaesthetic may provide temporary pain relief for up to four hours. Paracetamol may be taken if you experience discomfort. The steroid can take up to a week to reach maximum effect. Relief from symptoms does vary between patients, both in time and scale.

Some people do not receive pain relief from the procedure if the nerve root is not the cause for their pain. This is generally not a failure of the procedure. This information is useful for your doctor and indicates other causes of pain may need to be considered.

It is important you understand why and how we will be assisting you. If you have any questions, please call one of our clinics or speak to our staff on the day of your visit.

After the examination

You may experience some soreness or bruising at the needle site and, rarely, minor muscle spasm. You may also experience some temporary numbness at the injection site and in your affected limb. Occasionally, referred pain may increase in the days following the procedure.

Following the procedure, we will assess you for any numbness or weakness and monitor you for approximately 30 minutes. Before you leave, we will reassess you to ensure you are comfortable and walking safely. Once you have recovered sufficiently and are mobilising safely, you will be able to go home.

You will require someone to drive you home after the procedure. Please consider this when making your appointment. We advise you not to perform any lifting or physical activities that may aggravate your condition for at least 12 hours after the procedure.

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