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CYMRU  
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
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University Health Board

## **Patient Information Intercostal Injection**

### **Medical Day Case Unit / Day Surgery Unit**

You have been offered this procedure as part of your management plan which has been jointly discussed and agreed with your Consultant in Pain Medicine. Your pain is likely to respond to injection treatment if it is in a certain location in the body and is severe. Widespread or mild pain is not responding to injection treatment.

In all cases of managing chronic pain we aim at reduction of your symptoms so that you can achieve better mobility, reduce or discontinue medications, regain control of your life and improve its quality. Reduction of the severity of symptoms by 30% is considered to be successful in managing chronic pain. Pain relief procedures very seldom cure chronic pain. They help break the vicious circle of long-lasting pain symptoms but the duration of action cannot be predicted. The duration of treatment in which injection is considered appropriate will be no longer than 24 months in total.

It is also important to note that no procedure is risk free. Therefore injection treatment will not be repeated many times as the local anaesthetic and the steroid may cause side effects at the site of injection and when absorbed by the blood stream. Some of these effects include lower immunity, making you more vulnerable to infections caused by viruses and bacteria. This is specifically relevant in the current circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic.

Procedure specific risks are described in detail in the information leaflet. Please consider carefully the information provided below for the interventional procedure.

## **What is intercostal injection?**

Some types of pain are caused by nerves in the chest wall being irritated or trapped. An injection of a long acting steroid and local anaesthetic, round the area of the trapped nerve, may reduce pain.

## **What happens on the day?**

- Details of your appointment will be arranged by Pain Clinic staff after your attendance at the Pain Clinic. You will be sent a letter to attend for the injection.
- You may eat and drink normally before your treatment. Please bring somebody with you to drive you back home.
- On the day of treatment please report to reception at the Medical Day Case Unit/Day Surgery Unit at the arranged time and as indicated in your letter. You should bring the list of your medication with you.
- You will be taken through to the treatment area, to sit or lie on a bed. The nurse will take some details of you to check you are fit for the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form. The doctor will be able to answer any questions you might have at this time. The doctor will then clean the skin with antiseptic and inject the local anaesthetic and steroid mixture just under the ribs on the affected side. This may be a little uncomfortable but it is essential that you keep still.
- A dressing will be placed to cover the injection site.
- You will then be allowed to sit up and rest for about 30 minutes.
- When you are feeling comfortable you will be allowed to go home. You should not self drive or use public transport.
- After your treatment you will be given an appointment to come back to the Pain Clinic.

## **What to expect afterwards?**

After your procedure take things easy for the rest of the day. Avoid heavy work or strenuous exercise for a few days. You should keep the

injected site clean and dry and remove the dressing 24 hours following your injection. You are not allowed to use extreme heat such as in saunas or steam rooms for 48 hours. There may be some discomfort at the injection site for a couple of days after treatment, however, this should settle quite quickly. Continue taking your pain medication as advised by your consultant or until you feel benefit from the treatment.

If shortness of breath or persistent coughing develops you must return to the Accident & Emergency Department at the Hospital immediately and inform the casualty doctor that you have had an injection into the chest wall.

## **What are the side effects / complications?**

### **Common**

- Soreness / bruising at the injection site.
- Temporary increase (up to 7 days) in pain following procedure.

### **Rare**

- Puncture of the lung ( Pneumothorax)
- Haematoma
- Infection at the injection site
- Allergic reaction
- New pain
- Worsening pain

### **Very rare**

- Convulsions (fits)
- Temporary or permanent disabling nerve damage
- Cardiac arrest (stopping of the heart)

### **You must tell us if**

- You may be pregnant
- You are taking warfarin / clopidogrel
- You have an allergy to medicines, foods or latex
- Your medical condition has changed since you last saw the consultant
- You suffer from epilepsy
- You suffer from diabetes
- If you have cold or temperature.
- You have been admitted to hospital
- You are a wheelchair user and you might need help with getting out of it

- You are hard of hearing/deaf
- You are partially sighted/registered blind
- You need an interpreter
- You are very nervous about needles, hospitals or medical practitioners

You will be followed by a member of our pain management team

**For further information please contact:-**

Royal Gwent Hospital on Tel. No:- 01633 – 234938

Consultants:- Dr. T.M. Ivanova-Stoilova / Dr. S. Wartan

Nevill Hall Hospital on Tel. No:- 01873 – 732979

Consultants:- Dr. S. Jeffs / Dr. M. Joshi

**“This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**