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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Information for Patients having a Paravertebral Block

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 paravertebral block?

Paravertebral block is an injection of a local anaesthetic and slow acting steroid around the nerves coming out of the spine in the chest or in the lower back region.

How does paravertebral block work?

It can help reduce pain in the chest, legs and lower back. However it may not work for every patient.

What happens on the day?

You will be admitted on the Day Surgery Unit as indicated in your letter. You will need to change into a hospital gown and the clinic nurse is going to do some checks to make sure you are fit for this procedure. Then you will be seen by your doctor, who will answer your questions and ask you to sign your consent form. You will be taken to theatre on a trolley and you will be asked to roll on your stomach on the theatre table.

The skin will be cleaned with sterilising solution, and drapes will be placed around the injection site. Your injection will be done under X-ray control. You will be given a small pinprick with the local anaesthetic to numb the skin on the side of your back.

Thereafter the whole procedure will be done under a local anaesthetic. You will be aware of pressure and pushing. If you have a discomfort please let us know but remain still.

The X-ray machine will be moved around you and the height of the theatre table will be going up or down. It takes about 15-20 minute to complete the procedure.

After that you will be asked to roll back on the trolley and remain on your side or on your back for 30 minutes.

You will be looked after on the ward with checks of your blood pressure and heart beats every 5 minutes for half an hour. Then you will be allowed to sit up if you wish.

Later you will be allowed to go home. You must not drive and you should rest until the next day.

What are the side effects / complications?

Common

- Soreness / bruising at the injection site.

- Temporary increase (up to 7 days) in pain following procedure.

Rare

- Headache
- Haematoma (blood clot)
- 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 a latex allergy
- 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 a 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 up by the pain management clinic.

If you have any further concerns about this procedure please contact the telephone number below between 9am and 5pm:

RGH: Tel. **01633 - 234938**

Consultants: Dr. T. Ivanova-Stoilova and Dr. S. Wartan

NHH: Tel. **01873 - 732979**

Consultants: Dr. S. Jeffs and Dr. M. Joshi