

Lumbar Sympathetic Block

Why am I having a lumbar sympathetic block?

Your doctor thinks that your pain condition may involve the sympathetic nervous system. This means that in addition to pain you may experience swelling, colour changes and sweating in your legs or feet.

What is a lumbar sympathetic block?

By numbing the sympathetic nerves you may find that your pain and other symptoms will be reduced, but your doctor will assess this. You may also find that you experience a prolonged period of pain relief following this procedure. The procedure involves an injection of a local anaesthetic (a numbing medicine) and an anti-inflammatory drug (steroid) around these nerves. This is carried out under local anaesthetic using X-ray.

What will I be able to do afterwards?

After 45 minutes you should be able to walk and go home. Before you go we will ask you to describe your pain on a scale of 0-10. On occasion your legs may feel temporarily numb or weak for a few hours and this is why you should have someone with you. Do not walk without assistance if this happens. You may experience some muscle ache around the injection site for a few days. Do not drive or drink alcohol for twenty-four hours after the procedure. You may resume your normal level of activity the following day and should be able to return to work. It is important to realise that any relief obtained from this procedure should be used to increase your activity levels long term.

Will I experience any side effects?

You may experience the following symptoms: -

- Temporary pain at your injection site
- Dizziness – drink plenty fluids for the first 24 hours
- Temporary weakness in your legs
- Warm sensation in one or both of your legs
- Side effects from the anti-inflammatory are very uncommon and include temporary skin flushing

Are there any risks involved in a lumbar sympathetic block?

There is an element of risk involved in all the procedures and treatments that you may have at the pain clinic. However you should remember that these risks are usually minimal. Your doctor will discuss these fully before your procedure and will be happy to answer all your questions.

Who should I contact if I have any problems following treatment?

You can contact the Pain Clinic on between 9-2pm, Monday to Friday.
Outwith these hours you should contact your own GP or NHS 24.

Before you leave we will give you a letter for your GP which you should hand in to your surgery a couple of days after your treatment. If you need help overnight or at the weekend then give this letter to the doctor so that he/she will know what treatment you have had.