

## **Stellate Ganglion Information**

### **Why am I having a stellate ganglion 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 arms, hands, head or face. The pain that is caused by angina can also be helped with a stellate ganglion block by dilating the blood vessels which supply the heart.

### **What is a stellate ganglion block?**

After numbing the skin, the doctor will inject local anaesthetic into the stellate ganglion which is found at the front of your neck. 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.

### **How will I feel afterwards?**

Although your pain may decrease, immediately after the injection you may experience some temporary side effects which should last for 8-12 hours:

- You may feel flushed or warm on the same side as the injection.
- You may feel as if you have a lump in your throat.
- Your voice may be hoarse.
- On the side that was injected your eyelid may be droopy or your eye may be red.
- You may feel as if your nose is blocked on one side.
- You may feel slightly sore at the injection site.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

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.

### **What will I be able to do afterwards?**

You will be able to go home about one hour after the injection. Before you go we will ask you to describe your pain on a scale of 0-10. Do not drive or drink alcohol for twenty-four hours after the procedure. You should arrange to have someone collect you and stay with you overnight. You should be able to resume normal activity the day after the injection.

As you may find swallowing awkward we will not give you anything to drink immediately after the procedure. However, before you leave we will give you a glass of water and if you can swallow without difficulty you will be able to drink freely, although you should be careful with hot drinks. You should avoid foods which need a lot of chewing until the following day.

### **Who should I contact if I need help afterwards?**

You can contact the Pain Clinic on between 9-2pm, Monday to Friday. Outwith these hours you should contact your 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 few days after the procedure. If you need help overnight or at the weekend then take this letter with you so that the doctor will know what you have had done.