

## **Intravenous regional block Information**

### **Why am I having an intravenous regional 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, legs or feet.

### **What is an intravenous regional block?**

After numbing the skin, the doctor will place a needle into one of the veins in your affected limb. A tourniquet will also be placed on the limb and once inflated, this will feel very tight. The doctor will then inject local anaesthetic and another drug called guanethidine or phentolamine into your limb. The tourniquet will remain inflated for about 20 minutes to allow the drug to work, and then slowly let down. 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?**

If at any time during the procedure or after the tourniquet is let down you experience tingling or any unusual sensations around your mouth, or a metallic taste then you should tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. You will feel some pins and needles when the tourniquet is let down and this can last for 6-8 hours.

You may also experience some dizziness, and your limb may feel weak at first so you must ensure that it is supported and that you protect it from hot and cold items.

### **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 procedure. 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 if your limb feels as normal.

**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.