

FACT SHEET:

Interventional Procedures

CT Guided Selective Nerve Root Block/ Perineural Injection

What is a Nerve Root Block/ Perineural Injection?

This procedure involves an injection of Local Anaesthetic and Steroid into a nerve root of the spine to provide ongoing pain relief. The procedure is also known as a “periradicular block / injection” or “foraminal block / injection”.

The procedure is usually completed under CT guidance and it aims to stop the pain stemming from an inflamed nerve by reducing inflammation in the area.

A nerve root block is also used for patients who suffer from pain from a “pinched nerve”, also known as radicular pain. Radicular pain usually involves the legs where it is commonly known as Sciatica.

Preparation for the procedure

There is no specific preparation required. If you are on any blood thinning medication (Aspirin, Warfarin, Iscover, Plavix) please advise your referring doctor or Sovereign Radiology as these may need to be ceased before the procedure. We recommend that you bring a responsible person to drive you home afterwards.



If this is not possible we ask that you stay at the practice for 15-30 min for observation after the procedure. Please bring any prior scans (x-rays, ultrasounds, CT, or MRI's) and reports, as these will assist our Radiologist in assessing and effectively treating your condition.

What are the risks and complications?

The risks of spinal procedures are rare, however they may include:

- Infection at the skin puncture site or deeper within the facet joint (1-2%). These can be serious with (<0.1%) requiring hospital admission.
- Bleeding can occur in patients with bleeding disorders and on ‘blood thinning’ medication.
- Nerve damage from the direct needle trauma, or as a consequence of the above complications.
- Dural puncture when the needle penetrates into the sac encasing the nerves within the spinal canal, causing leakage of fluid contained within the sac, known as cerebrospinal fluid. The risk of this is approximately 1%.
- Allergic reaction any of the substances used during the procedure such as cortisone, dressing, local anaesthetic or antiseptic may cause an allergic reaction.

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During the procedure

- Spinal injection procedures are done with you lying face down on the CT scanner table. Once in this position we will ask you to remain as still as possible.
- A series of planning images are performed, with the area of needle entry planned and then a mark will be placed on your skin.
- The Radiologist will then clean your skin with a cold antiseptic wash and injects Local Anaesthetic into the injection site. This will sting for about 30-60 seconds, until the local anaesthetic takes effect.
- A fine needle is then passed through the skin and tissues, and is manipulated and moved under CT guidance until it is near the Nerve Root.
- The CT table will move in and out during this time to check the position of the needle.
- Occasionally you may experience a sensation of pain that may mimic your “nerve-like shooting” pain. This can help confirm the correct position of the needle and is a normal part of the procedure.
- Occasionally air can be injected to confirm the needle is in the correct position.
- The doctor will then inject a mixture of Steroid and Local Anaesthetic into the facet joint. Some discomfort may be felt for a short time until the local anaesthetic numbs the area.
- A simple dressing will be applied to the injection site.

After the procedure

The effects of the treatment can vary. At most, patients may experience some slight minor discomfort in the back. Since the local anaesthetic is administered around the nerve most patients

should be pain free for a few hours.

After a few hours, your pain may return and some patients can experience a sore back for a couple of days. Simple paracetamol can help with this. Patients will be kept at Sovereign Radiology for approximately 30 minutes for observation and will be discharged after they are walking safely and feeling well.

Please wait to be seen by our Radiologist for review post procedure.

You should not drive for the rest of the day. The following day you may return to work and gradually increase your activities. You should experience maximum pain relief around 3-5 days after the injection.

Follow up

A follow up appointment with your referring doctor or health care provider is recommended to discuss your results of the procedure. We recommend you do this approximately 1 week following the procedure.

You will be given a pain chart by the radiographer, please use this to record your level of pain to aid in rehabilitation and take this form to your follow up doctors visit.

The Radiologist conducting the spinal injection will send your referring doctor a report.