

SUPRA SCAPULAR NERVE INJECTION

Information for patients

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This information leaflet will help you to understand more about Suprascapular nerve (SSN) injections. For any further questions or if there is anything you do not understand, please feel free to ask any of the nurses or your doctor at the Pain Clinic.

You have been offered to have this injection treatment as a part of your pain management plan discussed with your consultant in the Pain Clinic.

What is Suprascapular nerve?

There is one suprascapular around each shoulder. The suprascapular is one of the pair of nerves, which allow your shoulder joint, shoulder blade, associated muscles and ligaments to feel sensations. These sensations include pain sensations.

What is Supra scapular nerve injection?

A suprascapular nerve injection is usually an injection of Local anaesthetic or a combination of local anaesthetic and a steroid around the affected shoulder joint. It is performed by your Pain doctor to try and give you some pain relief.

How is it done?

This injection is usually performed in the day case operating room or a treatment room. An ultrasound machine is often used to give this injection. Before you are escorted onto the operating or treatment room, the nurse will take your pulse and blood pressure and you will be asked to change into a gown.

What happens before the procedure?

Before the procedure is performed the nurse will ask you:

- If you are feeling unwell today
- If you are taking or have recently taken antibiotics for a infection (in last 4-6 weeks)
- If you are taking any regular medications to thin your blood e.g. Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Ticlopidine, Abciximab or Aspirin etc.
- If you are allergic to anything e.g. antibiotics, medications, local anaesthetics, steroids or sticky plaster
- If you are on any other regular medications
- If you have any other serious medical conditions

The doctor will take consent for the procedure and put a mark at the correct site of injection on your skin.

What will I feel during the procedure?

You may feel the needle going through your skin and some pressure when the medicine is injected. In most cases the local anaesthetic will numb the area and give some immediate relief. The doctor may ask you to tell them if you think the injection is going into the right spot where your pain is coming from.

How long will It take

It usually takes between 20-30 minutes for the whole procedure to be performed safely, but the time period can be variable from person to person.

What happens after the procedure?

After the injection the nurse will apply a dressing and then help you to the take you to the recovery suite. In the recovery room we advise you to rest for at least 30 minutes. Here your pulse and blood pressure will be monitored again by a nurse. Some people might need to lie down for a short while. You will be offered a drink before you go home.

You must not drive after the injection so you will need to arrange for someone to drive you home.

What will happen to my pain?

Following the injection of local anaesthetic your pain will improve in the first few hours. Your pain may return after the anaesthetic has worn off and there may be additional soreness as a result of the injection. You are advised to take simple painkillers e.g. Paracetamol, Diclofenac (if not contraindicated) and all your usual pain medication for the next few of days.

Has it got any side effects or risks?

Injections using steroids are advised not to be performed more than three times per year to avoid a potential side effects which can occur using steroids. These include:

- An increased risk of infection at the site of injection
- Raised or low blood sugars in diabetic patients
- Changes in the menstrual period duration in females
- An increase in appetite and possible gain in weight
- Dimpling of the skin at the site of the injection

Other commonly occurring risks are:

- Bleeding at the site of injection
- Bruising at the site of injection
- Swelling at the site of injection
- Flare up of pain
- Failure of injection
- Heaviness, numbness or tingling of the arm

Other risks that do not happen very often are:

- Feeling dizzy
- Infection
- Nerve or tissue damage
- An allergic reaction to the medicine

What happens next?

It is useful to make a note of when the pain starts to return as this is a question the doctors will ask you when/if you see them on your next appointment.

What should I do at home after the procedure?

On the day of treatment you may want to rest when you get home or you can continue as normal if you feel well enough. You should be able to drive the following day. If your pain improves then you should slowly build up your activity and exercise. However, pain is best managed by keeping active within your own limits.