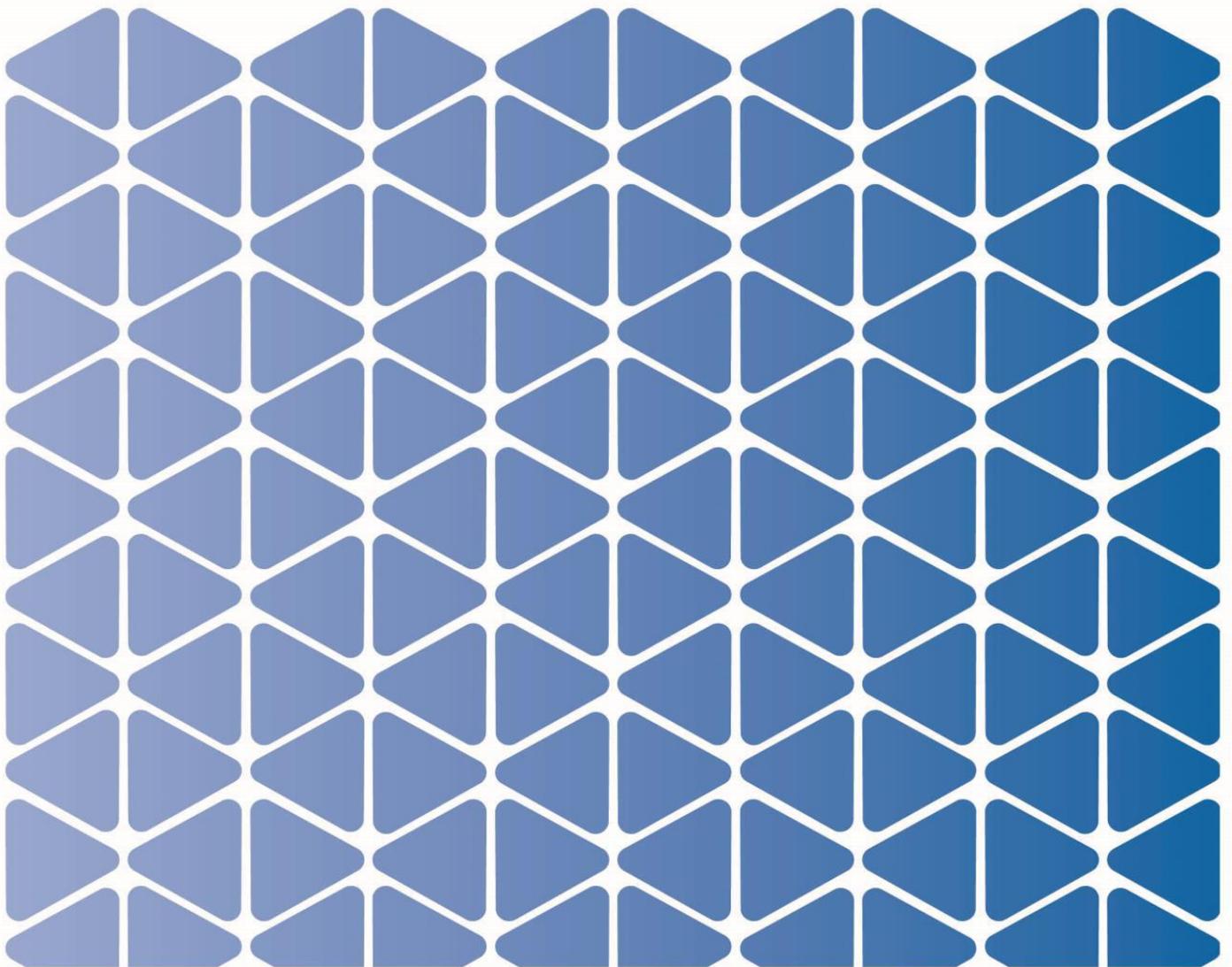




PATIENT INFORMATION

# LUMBAR NERVE ROOT BLOCK INJECTION



**IMPORTANT:** Please inform the doctor or nurse if you are pregnant or likely to be pregnant as this injection is performed with the aid of x-ray machines and uses radiopaque dye. Please also inform the staff if you are allergic to iodine or taking blood thinning medication.

*Frequently asked questions and the answers regarding nerve root block injections.*

### **What is a Nerve Root Block injection?**

It is an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid around the nerve root as it comes out of the spine.

### **What is the purpose of the injection?**

It is for nerve root pain. The aim of the injection is to inject the medication as close to the nerve root as possible. This may in turn reduce pain, tingling and numbness and other symptoms, caused by nerve inflammation, irritation or swelling.

### **How long does the injection take?**

The injection takes at least 15 minutes and is performed in a treatment room.

### **What is actually injected?**

The injection consists of a local anaesthetic into the skin and soft tissue and a mixture of local anaesthetic or saline, and steroid into the foramen. A radiopaque dye is used to confirm the needle position. This ensures the steroid medication is delivered as close to the nerve root as possible.

### **Will the injection hurt?**

The doctor will reduce the pain by injecting to numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anaesthetic using a very fine needle, prior to inserting the spinal needle. You may feel pressure and a pushing sensation along with some reproduction of your leg pain.

### **Will I be put to sleep for the injection?**

No, this injection is done under local anaesthetic.

### **How is the injection performed?**

It is performed with the patient lying on their stomach. The area on your back where the injection will be given will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and sterile sheets will be placed around the injection site. The injection is carried out with the aid of x-ray images.

### **What should I expect after the injection?**

Occasionally you may have temporary weakness or numbness of your leg within 10 minutes of the procedure which can last approximately 2 to 3 hours or until the full effect of the local anaesthetic has worn off. Great care should be taken when getting up from the bed after the procedure. Following the injection, you will be taken to recovery where you will be given a hot drink.

## **What should I do after the procedure?**

We advise you NOT TO drive for 24 hours following the injection, and take it easy for the rest of the day and then resume normal activities as tolerated. (Driving may invalidate your car insurance for a period following treatment).

## **How long will the injection last?**

The steroid usually starts working in about 5 to 10 days or up to 2 weeks and its effects can last for several days to several months.

## **Benefits**

Nerve root block injections can ease:

- Nerve root pain causing sciatica
- Offers a window of opportunity to be able to increase your level of activity, in order to manage your pain better.

## **Risks & Complications**

- For some people the injection may not work at all.
- Headache
- There may be temporary exacerbation of your pain and stiffness after the injection.
- Temporary facial flushing and weight gain (steroid effect).
- Can lower blood pressure at the time of injection.
- Temporary increase in blood sugar.
- Temporary menstrual disturbances.
- May cause dimpling or discolouration of the skin at the site of the injection.
- As with any injection there is a slight chance of getting an infection where the needle is placed
- There is a small risk of nerve damage (less than 1:10,000 chance) which may be severe and permanent e.g. numbness, new nerve pain, pins and needles, weakness etc.
- Rare risks include bleeding around the nerve root and allergic reaction.

## **Alternative Treatments**

Apart from nerve root block injections, there are other pain reducing therapies which may help including:

- Pain relieving medicines
- Physiotherapy
- Functional Restoration Programme
- TENS
- Self help

## **CONTACTS**

Should you require help or advice please contact your Specialist Nurse:

Worcestershire Royal Hospital  
Monday – Thursday  
Tel: 01905 733313  
Answer Phone Service

Kidderminster Treatment Centre  
Tel: 01562 512 379

Evesham Community Hospital  
Tel: 07436 038 681  
Or  
Your local GP/Primary Care Unit

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.