

Patient information leaflet CT Guided Spinal Injections

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your CT guided spinal injection procedure.

Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a CT guided spinal injection?

A CT guided spinal injection is a medical procedure that uses CT (Computed Tomography) imaging to guide the accurate placement of a needle and medication into a specific area of the spine, such as a facet joint or around a nerve root.

Why do I need a CT guided spinal injection?

A CT guided spinal injection is used to precisely target medication such as steroid or local anesthetic into areas like nerves or joints to relieve symptoms of pain and inflammation.

Who will be doing the CT guided spinal injection?

A radiologist (specialist x-ray doctor) will perform the procedure. A radiologist has special expertise in using scanning equipment (CT and ultrasound) and in interpreting the images produced. They will look at these images whilst performing the injection.

Preparation for an injection.

The injection will take place in the CT department (part of the radiology department).

You may have some blood tests prior to the biopsy to check you do not have an increased risk of bleeding. If you are taking any blood thinning medications, like warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor you should inform your doctor before the procedure.

You may eat and drink as normal prior to your injection.

Please leave any jewellery or valuables at home.

Please contact the booking team before your appointment if:

- you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you have had a previous allergic reaction to x-ray dye (contrast agent) or are allergic to iodine.
- If you are a diabetic taking Metformin.
- If you have been advised or told to restrict your fluid intake.
- If you weigh over 30 stone/190 kilograms
- If you have problems standing or need a hoist to transfer
- If you require an interpreter – please inform us as soon as you receive your appointment letter, and we will arrange an interpreter for you.

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If you are unsure or have questions about your preparation, contact your doctor or the X-ray department for advice.

Are there any risks?

X-ray radiation: As CT scans involve the use of x-rays, there is a small risk associated with the radiation dose you will receive. The amount of radiation dose associated with a CT is greater than a plain X-Ray, because a CT scans provide a more detailed '3D' picture of what is going on inside the body.

This can significantly aid your diagnosis or treatment.

When the referral is received by the Imaging Department (Radiology) a team of Radiologists and Radiographers carefully check the request to see if the benefit of having the scan, would outweigh the risk of the dose of radiation you will receive.

The radiographer is present throughout your test making sure that the dose is kept as low as reasonably possible and the duration and level of x-rays are kept to a minimum.

Procedure: A CT guided spinal injection is a very safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure there are some risks and complications that can arise.

There is a small risk of bleeding, although this is generally very slight.

There is a small risk of infection, however every precaution is taken to prevent this from occurring.

Despite these possible complications, a CT guided spinal injection is normally very safe and is designed to save you from having a bigger procedure.

Patients aged 12 to 55, could you be pregnant? X-rays can be harmful to an unborn baby and should be avoided by patients who are or may be pregnant.

It is recommended that the examination is performed within 10 days of the first day of your menstrual period.

If your appointment is not within this time or if you think you may be pregnant, please contact the X-ray department before your appointment. When you arrive for your test, you will be asked when your last period started. If it is more than 10 days earlier, your appointment may be postponed.

Breastfeeding: No special precautions are required and you can carry on breastfeeding as normal. However, if you have any concerns you may want to express some breast milk prior to your appointment.

This information is from guidance provided by The Royal College of Radiologists

Allergies

If you have any allergies you must inform your doctor. If you have previously reacted to contrast medium (the dye used for CT imaging) you must tell your doctor about this.

Medication

Please contact the radiology department if you are taking blood thinning medication (anti coagulants) such as Warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor.

Getting to us

When attending The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX), follow the signage to the radiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, green zone.

Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the radiology department at your given appointment time. A notification through text or letter should have been sent to you to confirm this appointment.

Can someone stay with me in the hospital?

You may have a friend or relative attend with you, but they will be asked to stay in the waiting area while you have your procedure.

Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

The day of the procedure

A radiology nurse will collect you from reception. You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to undress and put on a gown; You may also be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, glasses, or other metal objects, which may show up on the X-rays.

The radiology nurse will take a brief history and perform some observations.

Before the procedure, the interventional radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign an electronic consent form.

Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have and, remember that even at this stage, you can decide against going ahead with the procedure if you so wish.

The procedure

You will be taken to the CT scanning room. Your identification will be checked by a nurse and radiographer.

You will then be asked to lie on the CT scanner table or ultrasound examination table in the position that the radiologist has decided is most suitable, usually on your front.

The radiologist will keep everything as sterile as possible. Your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic and you may have some of your body covered with a sterile sheet.

The radiologist will use CT scanner to decide on the most suitable point for inserting the injection needle. It is very important to keep still during the procedure.

Your skin will be then anaesthetised and the injection needle inserted into the precise area.

Most injections do not hurt. The local anaesthetic used to anaesthetise the skin will sting to start with, but this will soon pass as the skin and deeper tissues become numb. You may be aware of a pressure sensation as the needle passes into the deeper tissues but this is usually well tolerated.

Once the radiologist is happy with the placement, they will inject the required medication into the facet joint or nerve space.

Your nurse, radiographer and radiologist will be with you the whole time during the procedure and will explain what is happening or what you need to do on the day. If you have any questions or concerns, it is OK to ask.

How long will this take? The procedure may take 20-30 minutes, although you should expect to be in the department for up to an hour.

Is it uncomfortable? This procedure is not painful but, it can be uncomfortable.

After the procedure

You will be taken back to the nursing area.

A nurse will carry out routine observations, such as taking your pulse and blood pressure, to make sure there are no problems.

If you have any pain following the procedure, we may give you some pain-relief medication.

Once the observations are done you can go home when you feel comfortable.

Can I drive after my procedure?

We recommend that you do not drive for twenty-four hours and you ask a friend or relative to drive you home following your procedure.

How soon can I return to work?

We recommend you do not undertake strenuous activity and rest for the remainder of the day.

What do I do if I feel unwell after I have gone home?

If you feel unwell after your procedure, you should seek medical advice from your GP/hospital doctor or through the emergency department and inform them that you have had a procedure.

Follow-up

You will have a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss the results of your injection.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions about your procedure or an existing appointment, please contact the radiology department (**Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm**) at **01279 82 2527 or 3405**

If you have any queries **outside of working hours (after 4pm and on weekends)**, you will be redirected to the main radiology reception.

Please note appointment bookings cannot be made during this time.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team at paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.