

## Patient information leaflet Ultrasound guided injection

Radiology department

### Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your ultrasound scan. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

**If, for any reason, you are unable to attend or no longer require this appointment, please telephone 01279 827179**, select options for appointments, then for ultrasound. This will avoid undue delay and will help us to keep our waiting list as short as possible.

Please note that children, other than those being scanned, are not allowed in the scan rooms and we are unable to offer supervision of children in the waiting room. If you are having difficulties coordinating childcare please contact the booking team.

**Staff are not permitted to supervise children so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your scan being rescheduled.**

Please let us know well before your appointment if you would like to request staff of a specific gender. We may not be able to meet your requirements on the day. Your appointment may have to be rescheduled to facilitate this.

### What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound examinations (scans) are tests which use high-pitched sound waves and specialist equipment to produce an image. They are particularly good at looking at some of the softer structures in our body without using ionizing radiation. The ultrasound is harmless and should be painless. To perform the ultrasound scan we will put ultrasound gel on the skin and move a small probe over the area of interest.

### Why do I need an Ultrasound scan?

Your doctor has asked us to perform a steroid injection to help treat your symptoms. We would expect your doctor to have discussed the reasons for the injection with you prior to your referral. We will do an ultrasound scan to guide the needle into the correct place. Steroid injections are used to ease pain and reduce swelling. The steroid is often injected in combination with a local anaesthetic. The injection maybe into a painful joint but may also be used to treat inflammation in soft tissues, given into a tendon sheath, muscle or around a nerve for example.

### Preparing for your procedure

There is no advance preparation for this test but please contact us as soon as possible if:

- You have a known blood clotting disorder
- You are on medication that suppresses your immune system e.g. methotrexate or beta interferon, or steroids.
- You have an infection or any other medical condition which may mean we need to reschedule this appointment
- You are pregnant

Please make plans for your journey home, it is not advisable to drive for 8 hours after the injection.

Version 3 | Paula Mattock| Ultrasound | Date ratified: April 2025 | Review date: April 2028



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## Eating and drinking

You may eat and drink as normal for this test.

## Medication

Please take any regular medication as usual unless advised otherwise.

## Getting to us

We have three hospital sites, **please check your letter to ensure you attend the correct location.**

Our addresses are;

The Princess Alexandra Hospital  
Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX

St Margaret's Hospital  
The Plain, Epping, Essex, CM16 6TN

Herts and Essex Hospital  
Haymeads Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5JH

## When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the department 5 minutes before your appointment time.

Please go to the reception desk where your details will be checked, you will be asked to wait in the seating area.

Please be mindful that parking on site may be difficult and allow extra time

## The day of the procedure

Please wear loose-fitting clothing over the area being scanned.

## The procedure

The ultrasound guided injection may be performed by a radiologist or sonographer who will explain the procedure and give you the opportunity to ask questions.

A radiology department assistant may also be present. Because we are a teaching hospital, there may also be some supervised trainees at your appointment. The team will make every effort to ensure your comfort and dignity.

We have both male and female staff working in the department. If you would like a chaperone for your examination, please let us know when you arrive for your appointment.

We will perform the scan in our ultrasound room which may be dimly lit so that we can see the images produced on the screen more clearly. We will ask you to lie down on a couch or sit on a chair and move your clothing away from the area of interest. Ultrasound gel will be placed on your skin and we will move an ultrasound probe over the area of interest. Please let us know if you feel pain at any point during the scan.

For the injection, the skin is cleansed using an antiseptic solution or wipe. Local anaesthetic may be injected to numb the tissue. Then using ultrasound guidance, the needle is inserted into position and the injection is performed. The injection often involves a mixture of local anaesthetic and a steroid (a long acting corticosteroid), which is an anti-inflammatory medicine. In some cases, the radiologist may also discuss additions to this procedure.

The scan can take up to 30 minutes. We will do our best to make sure that you are seen on time, but emergencies may have to take priority on some occasions.

## After the procedure

If local anaesthetic has been injected, you may not feel any pain for a few hours afterwards. The area may feel uncomfortable once the anaesthetic wears off, you may feel increased pain for a few days afterwards.

There are small risks associated with this injection, which you should be aware of before you proceed. The radiologist/sonographer doing your procedure will talk you through this when you arrive

- **Discomfort:** You may experience some discomfort immediately after the procedure. This is usually mild and can be helped with over-the-counter painkillers if required.
- **Change in glucose control:** If you are diabetic, particularly if you are on insulin, you may experience low or high blood glucose levels after a steroid injection. Please monitor this closely after the procedure until it returns to your normal pattern.
- **Bleeding:** This is unlikely to cause you a problem. If you have a medical condition that affects your blood clotting, please let us know in advance. If you are on anticoagulant or antiplatelet medication, you are more likely to experience bruising and bleeding, please let us know about this when you come in for your injection.
- **Steroid flare:** Occasionally steroid injections can temporarily worsen your symptoms. This is not common. If you are concerned about this, then please see your GP or contact the doctor who referred you.
- **Infection:**
  - **Soft tissue injections**  
If you experience marked redness, swelling or tenderness around the injection site, please see your GP or a walk-in clinic within 24 hours as this may require treatment.
  - **Joint injections**  
If the injected joint becomes progressively painful 1-2 weeks after the procedure, please seek urgent medical care. There may be a chance of a joint infection.
- **Facial flushing:** This is not common. If this does happen, it is temporary and typically goes away within a couple of days.
- **Skin depigmentation:** Occasionally steroid injections can cause the skin around where the needle has been inserted to become slightly paler in colour.

## Can I drive after my procedure?

No, we do not recommend driving yourself 8 hours after this procedure. Because you have been given a local anaesthetic, your insurance provider may choose not to cover you if you have a road accident.

## Can someone stay with me in hospital?

You may have an adult friend or family member attend with you, but they will usually stay in the waiting area while you have your examination.

If you think you may require extra support from a friend or family member during the scan please discuss this with the Radiologist / sonographer who will be performing the scan or when checking in.

## How soon can I return to work

We would advise you do not drive or 'operate heavy machinery' for 8 hours after the procedure.

### How soon will I get my results?

The results will be sent back electronically to the doctor or healthcare professional who referred you for the ultrasound guided injection.

At your next GP/outpatient appointment, you will be able to discuss the results.

### Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please contact the ultrasound booking team on:

**Telephone 01279 827179**, select the option for appointments, then for ultrasound.

Office hours **09:00-16:00 Mon-Fri** (excluding bank holidays)

There is no answerphone service for ultrasound bookings, patients who ring outside of the opening times are diverted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Radiology reception desk until 8pm

If you have a weekend or evening appointment at either of the following hospitals and are delayed, please call the numbers below to speak with the appropriate radiology reception;

St Margaret's Hospital **01279 827038**

Herts and Essex Hospital **01279 827162**

### Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on [paht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:paht.pals@nhs.net) or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team on [paht.communications@nhs.net](mailto:paht.communications@nhs.net) if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.