

Diagnostic Procedures

QPain will often trial the effectiveness of more advanced procedures and/or determine the precise location of pain via diagnostic procedures, including:

Nerve Root Blocks – Local anaesthetic is placed on a specific nerve root of the spine to help identify the exact source of pain, usually in the arm or leg. The injection usually also contains steroid to decrease inflammation and pain.

Medial Branch Blocks for Back and/or Neck Pain – Local anaesthetic is injected beside the facet joints of the spine to determine if they are the cause of pain.

Sacroiliac Joint Injections for Low Back or Buttock Pain - Local anaesthetic (and sometimes cortisone) is injected beside the sacroiliac joints of the spine to determine if they are the cause of pain.

Genicular Nerve Blocks for Knee Pain - Local anaesthetic is injected beside the genicular nerves of the knee to determine whether anaesthetising them relieves pain.

Diagnostic procedures are often used to establish suitability for Radiofrequency Neurotomy and whilst they might will provide relief from pain, it is only temporary.

What's involved

Patients must not eat for 6 hours before the procedure. Clear fluid is allowed until 2 hours before the procedure (200ml each hour maximum)

During the procedure, patients generally lie face down while skin is numbed with local anaesthetic before a small needle is inserted under x-ray guidance to the appropriate position. Medications are then injected and patients are closely monitored throughout. The procedure takes approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Most patients choose to be sedated for the procedure and consequently do not feel any pain.

Afterwards, patients may experience a period of numbness for a few hours and some have minor pain associated with the injection(s) which goes away after a few hours.

You must make arrangements to be collected after the procedure as you will not be able to drive yourself home.

Considerations

As with any procedure, there are risks and possible side effects or complications. If you have any concerns, contact your specialist to discuss. Your specialist will discuss all the possible side effects relevant to you before the procedure.

- You must inform us if you:
- Are prone to excessive bleeding or taking blood thinning medication
- Have a systemic bacterial infection or local skin infection near the injection site
- Are diabetic
- Might be pregnant

After discharge, it's important to contact your local Emergency Department, GP or QPain in the event of:

- Bleeding, swelling or discharge at the site of the injection
- Increasing pain
- Noticeable changes in sensation or difficulty moving limbs
- Difficulty passing urine