

Diagnostic Medial Branch Blocks

Pain Clinic Patient Information Leaflet

- Local anaesthetic may rarely spread to surrounding areas causing some **numbness and/or weakness**. This is temporary.
- **Infection:** This is rare. You should seek medical help if there is local warmth or redness over the site of injection with tenderness, and/or you feel hot and unwell. This may require antibiotic treatment.
- There are very important nerves in the spine, but **serious nerve injury is extremely rare** (less than 1 in 10,000 cases).
- You may experience **low blood pressure** and you may feel faint.

Completing a pain diary

A pain diary helps us to understand your pain levels after your procedure. Please record your pain scores over the next 24 hours on the diary that we provide you on the day of the procedure. Please return the pain diary to us via email or post.

What follow-up will be arranged?

- You will be contacted by the Pain Clinic Nursing Team 1-2 weeks after your procedure.
- If you have any questions/concerns about your appointment please contact the **Pain Clinic Admin Team** on **01225 824331**. To leave patient experience feedback please go online to www.ruh.nhs.uk/FFT

More in-depth patient information is available: www.fpm.ac.uk/about-pain-medicine-patients-relatives/patient-information-leaflets

If you have any queries, please contact:

The Pain Clinic

Zone F, Department F18
RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies
Centre - Royal United Hospitals Bath

Intervention Follow-Up Advice Line: 01225 826896

(This is an Answer-phone Service, please leave a message. Phone messages are checked 14:00-15:00 Monday to Friday, we will aim to call back in 24-48 hours)

If you need advice during out-of-hours, please contact your GP or NHS111.

The RUH, where you matter

Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net or 01225 825656.



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Checklist

- Bring a list of all current medications
- Make arrangements for someone to collect you after the procedure
- Wear loose comfortable clothing
- Glasses (if you need them to read)
- Please inform the Pain Clinic if you take any blood thinning medication e.g. warfarin, clopidogrel, apixaban. The Pain Clinic will provide instructions on how to manage these medications prior to your appointment.

Changes to your health

Please let your doctor know if:

- You have an infection
- You have started on anticoagulant or antiplatelet medications
- You have diabetes
- You have any allergies
- You are pregnant
- You are planning to travel abroad within 2 weeks of the injections.

Consent

If you have any questions before your appointment, please contact the Pain Clinic. **Your doctor will obtain your signed consent before the injection.**

What is a Diagnostic Medial Branch Blocks?

A diagnostic medial branch block is an injection of local anaesthetic over nerves that supply the facet joints. This procedure is used to help diagnose the source of your pain. Facet joints are small joints that link the bones of the spine together, they allow movement and stabilise the spine. Several injections to different facet joints may be needed depending on the site of pain.

This is not a treatment; it is a test injection that may only provide temporary relief for your pain.

If you have temporary relief from this procedure, it can help predict how your pain may respond to further treatments like Radiofrequency Denervation.

The procedure

- Observations will be taken.
- You will need to be able to lie on your tummy for up to 30-40 minutes for the procedure.
- The injection site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution (this can feel cold).
- An injection of local anaesthetic will be used to numb the area (this will sting).
- The doctor will direct the injections to the area(s) suspected to be causing pain. An x-ray machine may be used.

- You may feel pressure or tightness as the injection(s) are made.

Aftercare

- After the procedure you will be taken to recovery and monitored for around 15-30 minutes before you are able to go home.
- Ideally, you should arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours.
- You should not drive, operate machinery, sign legal documents, provide childcare unsupervised or drink alcohol for 24 hours and until fit to do so.
- You may experience some soreness or aching at the injection site.
- **Please keep the area of the injection dry for 24 hours following the procedure.**
- **You should try and continue your daily activities on the day of the procedure, paying attention to your pain levels throughout the day.**
- Do not worry if your pain feels worse for a few days after, this sometimes happens; take your regular medications and this should settle with time.

Possible side effects and risks

As with any procedure, side effects may occur. These are usually minor but there are risks with this procedure.

- **Injection treatments are not always effective and may not help your pain.**
- **Mild local tenderness/bruising:** This usually settles over the first few days.