My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Frimley Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Spinal Surgery - Spinal Nerve Root Injection

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Guidance for Patients

A nerve root injection is normally undertaken in order to determine the cause of pain in the leg or foot. It is a test rather than a treatment for your pain. After a small injection to give local anaesthetic, a special dye that is visible on X-ray is injected next to the nerve root via a fine needle. This is followed by another injection of local anaesthetic and a steroid.

The procedure is often done under local anaesthesia (to numb the injection site and surrounding area) but sometimes your surgeon may decide that intravenous sedation (so the patient is asleep) is required. You will be asked to lie down on a couch on your stomach or side. The skin on the back is cleaned with antiseptic solution. A radiograph (X-ray) is then used to guide placement of a needle just outside the nerve root, close to where it leaves in between the vertebral bodies. Radiographic contrast (or dye) is often used to outline the nerve root before a small volume of corticosteroid (3–4mls) and/or local anaesthetic is injected. It usually only takes 5–10 minutes to inject each painful nerve root.

If you are taking medications then you should still take them, including any pain medication or medication for diabetes. However, the procedure is not safe for people taking any medications to thin their blood, such as warfarin or clopidogrel. You may eat and drink as usual before the procedure, unless you are having a cervical (neck) nerve root injection, in which case you must not eat and drink for 4 hours before the procedure

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

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When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

Contact Us

In some areas, we are experiencing a significant backlog following our response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are doing everything we can to reduce this backlog including putting on extra clinics and theatre lists and opening additional sites to offer these services. We have also increased the ways we can offer appointments including offering more video and telephone appointments (as well as face to face appointments where appropriate).

Please can we request that you **do not contact your GP practice about waiting times**, as they do not have access to this information.

If you have any concerns or questions please use the contact details on your hospital letter, or if you do not have a letter with these contact details please contact our **Patient Advice & Liaison teams.**

Keep Moving

Reducing your weight and getting active are two of the most powerful things you can do for your body and for your mind. Extra weight places additional strain on your lungs and heart, making it harder for the body to cope with surgery and respond to diseases, including COVID-19

Eating a healthy diet will help you get fit and recover quicker after surgery. Being a healthy weight also reduces your risk of blood clots and wound infections afterwards.

Visit our weight management page for details of local support available.

Improve Your Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone which has caused a lot of people to think more seriously about their health. If you have decided this is the right time for you to make changes check out

www.nhs.uk/live-well and www.nhs.uk/oneyou/

They can also provide some inspiration for you and your family. The Trust has access to many resources which may help you in making healthier choices, these can be accessed here.

Good Mental Health

Mental health issues will affect 1 in 4 people at some point in their life. Although FHFT does not itself provide urgent mental health specialist services, we are keen that you can access help and support when you need it. Please visit FHFT website where you can access links to Mental Health support in the local area.

Ongoing health conditions

About 15 million people in England have an ongoing health condition.

Long-term conditions or chronic diseases are conditions for which there is currently no cure, and which are managed with drugs and other treatment, for example: diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, arthritis and hypertension (high blood pressure).

If you are living with one of these ongoing health conditions, there are many ways in which you can look after yourself.

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The contents of this information have been reviewed and approved by the Deputy Medical Director of Frimley Health Foundation Trust