

Dr Rajesh Munglani MB. BS. DA. DCH. FRCA. FFPMRCA
Consultant in Pain Medicine

Consulting Rooms:

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Appointments: 01284 716700/701371

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Appointments: 01223 479024

All Enquiries & Correspondence to:

Sue Sanalitra, PA to Dr R Munglani, Spire Cambridge Lea Hospital (address as above)
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Patient Information Leaflet

TEMPORARY SYMPATHETIC BLOCK

What is a Sympathetic Block Injection?

These injections (blocks) are used to treat nerve pain, which may be caused by nerves, not normally used, to carry pain messages. Occasionally these nerves may alter in function and become pain-carrying nerves. Pain, which occurs in the face, arms, chest, abdomen, back, pelvic region or legs may sometimes be caused by these conditions. Often this type of pain is accompanied by intense sensitivity of the skin, occasionally changes in skin colour, and changes in the temperature of the skin. Local anaesthetic and, in some cases, steroids are used for these procedures.

It is very important that you inform Dr Munglani if you are taking drugs to thin your blood, for example Warfarin and Clopidogrel. Dr Munglani will then provide guidance as to whether there is a need to temporarily stop any blood-thinning drug.

The day of treatment:

You will arrive at the hospital you have chosen to attend at the time given to you by Dr Munglani's office. You stay will be as a Day Case Inpatient admission (and very occasionally as an overnight stay). On arrival at the hospital the staff will ensure that your paperwork is all in order and will then show you to your room or the Day Care Centre, as appropriate. You will be provided with the necessary theatre gown but if you wish you may bring your own dressing gown and slippers. Routine tests will be carried out by a nurse prior to your procedure such as blood pressure, pulse etc. Following this Dr Munglani will visit with you to discuss your procedure, following which you will be asked to sign a Consent Form.

The procedure will be carried out under x-ray screening. Once in the treatment room a small needle will be placed in the back of your hand. This is essential for safety reasons and allows Dr Munglani to give you sedation. Once you are in the correct position on the x-ray table, Dr Munglani will clean the treatment area with an antiseptic solution, which can feel very cold on the skin.

The injection will then take place. You may feel a pushing sensation or some discomfort at this stage. Liquid contrast is injected to make sure that the needle tip is in the correct position, as seen on the x-ray. Once this is confirmed, local anaesthetic is injected and you may feel a warm sensation in the part of your body that is normally painful.

Following your injection:

After the procedure you will be taken to the recovery area before returning to your room/day care unit. You may feel a little drowsy and wish to sleep. You will then be offered light refreshment.

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Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked again prior to discharge and you may/may not have a visit from either Dr Munglani or his Pain Nurse Specialist.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ARRANGED FOR SOMEONE TO COLLECT YOU AFTER THE PROCEDURE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN YOUR PROCEDURE BEING CANCELLED.

FOLLOWING SEDATION WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU ARRANGE FOR SOMEBODY TO STAY WITH YOU OVERNIGHT AND THAT YOU DO NOT DRIVE FOR 24 HOURS AFTER THE PROCEDURE.

Benefits:

The relief from such procedures tends to be short-lived but they can be repeated, if helpful. These blocks are sometimes used to see if a more longer-lasting sympathetic denervation, using phenol and/or radiofrequency would be beneficial (a denervation is a procedure that aims to permanently stop a nerve transmitting pain.)

Risks:

Since local anaesthetic and, in some cases, a steroid is used for the procedure headaches and temporary increase in weight may be experienced. Immediately after the procedure your blood pressure may drop causing you to feel light-headed. There may be an increase in pain in the first few days but this may last longer.

Blocks in the neck may occasionally alter your voice, cause swallowing difficulties and facial flushing. There is a 1% to 3% chance of a pneumothorax (collapsed lung) associated with injections into the neck and chest. Abdominal injections may cause diarrhoea initially, whilst lumbar sympathetic blocks may cause groin soreness, hot or numb legs. Sympathetic blocks may cause temporary alteration of bladder and sexual function. These symptoms may last for two or three days, very occasionally up to two weeks or longer.

Unfortunately, no procedure is risk free. Although long-term side effects and complications, including increase in pain are uncommon, the possibility cannot be excluded. Common short-term side effects may include pain at the site of injection and increased pain generally and far less commonly, infection, bruising, bleeding and injury of body structures with the injection.

What to expect afterwards:

Some immediate relief may be noticed due to the local anaesthetic but some tenderness may be felt at the injection site.

Take your regular painkillers as normal. It is important not to stop any drugs prescribed for pain relief suddenly. You should gradually reduce your painkillers, as you feel better.

Try to keep on the move about the house but do not do anything too strenuous. As your pain decreases, try to gently increase your exercise. Simple activities like a daily walk, using an exercise bike or swimming on your back will help to increase your muscle tone and strengthen you. The best way is to increase your activity slowly. Try not to overdo things on good days, or you might end up paying for it with pain the following day.

Dr Munglani will write a letter to your GP and/or referring consultant, advising them of the procedure you have carried out, and a follow up appointment will be made for you to be reviewed in due course.

Points to Remember:

1. Nothing to eat for 4 hours prior to your procedure but you can have small quantities of clear fluids until the time of the procedure. If you are diabetic please ask Dr Munglani for advice.
2. Please bring your glasses if you need them for reading.
3. Please bring either your actual medication or a list of all current medication (tablets).
4. Continue taking all your regular medication on treatment day.
5. If there is any possibility that you may be pregnant, please inform Dr Munglani as soon as possible.
6. You will be admitted to the hospital you have chosen to attend as a day case patient. You will be discharged after midday on the same day as the procedure (however, if you have been requested to stay overnight, you will be discharged early the following morning).
7. Please ensure that you have somebody to drive you home and that someone is available to stay with you on the evening following your procedure if you are discharged on the same day.
8. Please note that you should not drive for 24 hours following your procedure.

Additional Information:

Having read this leaflet, if you require further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Kelly, Dr Munglani's Pain Nurse on 079123 57430.

If you have any administration queries please contact Dr Munglani's PA Sue Sanalidro on 01223 479024

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