

# Stellate Ganglion Block

An information guide



# Stellate Ganglion Block

If you are on blood thinning medications such as Warfarin, Nicoumalone (Sinthrome), Aspirin, Clopidogrel (Plavix), Ticlopidine (Ticlid) then please contact the Booking and Scheduling Department on 0161 778 2288.

## What is a stellate ganglion block?

A stellate ganglion block is an injection of local anaesthetic (medication that temporarily numbs the nerves) around the stellate ganglion.

The stellate ganglion is a collection of sympathetic nerves on the sides of the neck. The sympathetic nerves control functions like skin temperature, sweating, blood flow and the action of internal organs.

## Why is this injection done?

This injection is used to treat certain types of pain in your arm, chest, face or head.

It is also done to test and treat if the sympathetic nervous system is responsible for your pain.

## How is the injection done?

You will be advised to come to the Day Surgery Unit for the injection.

You will be awake during the procedure. A cannula (plastic tube) will be placed at the back of your hand. The procedure is done under local anaesthetic (medication to numb the skin). In some circumstances, medication such as pain killers can be given through the cannula.

The stellate ganglion block injection site is marked on the front of your neck and cleaned with antiseptic solution. You will be asked to remain quiet and to keep your mouth slightly open.

A small needle is used to inject some local anaesthetic around the stellate ganglion. The actual injection takes only a few minutes. The injection may be repeated depending on your response.

### **What are the beneficial effects?**

The injection helps in managing some types of pain. The pain relief may take a few days or weeks to take effect and may not be 100% complete. Some patients may not get any relief at all.

The effectiveness of the injection is difficult to predict. In some groups of patients the injection may help by reducing the number of painkillers that are required to control the pain and thereby improving the quality of life.

### **What are the effects after the injection?**

After the injection, it is common to find that the arm on the side of the injection is temporarily warm and heavy with a sensation of pins and needles.

The eyesight may be blurred, the pupil of the eye might appear small with drooping of the eyelid on the side of the injection. The face may feel warm. Your voice may get hoarse and your nose might be blocked up.

Occasionally there may be some difficulty in swallowing. These effects can be expected and usually wear off within 24 to 48 hours. Very rarely, a small percentage of patients may experience an increased level of pain.

## **What are the immediate side effects?**

Very rarely the local anaesthetic may enter the blood vessel that supplies the head and cause light headedness and blackout.

Long term consequences are negligible with prompt treatment. Other risks may include bleeding, difficulty in breathing or injection into and damage to surrounding area.

## **What are the late side effects?**

Late side effects are rare. However, if you experience swelling of the neck or have difficulty in breathing, please go immediately to the nearest Accident & Emergency Department and take this information leaflet with you.

## **Advice/precautions**

- You will be required to stay in hospital for at least half hour to an hour after the procedure
- A follow-up appointment will be arranged, so that the doctor or nurse can review the effect of the injection
- You should carry on with your normal activities, try to increase the exercises you have been given and aim to reduce your pain killers, if the effect of the block appears to have been successful
- If there are any concerns or queries, please contact the pain clinic.

**It is very important that you inform the doctor or secretary in the pain clinic at least one week before the injection if:**

- You are allergic to any medications
- You have an infection near the injection site
- You think you might be pregnant
- Caution should be exercised if you have had a recent heart attack or vaccination.

## **Contact Details:**

### **Oldham**

Day Surgery - 0161 627 8212

Pain Secretary - 0161 656 1211

### **Fairfield**

Day Surgery - 0161 778 2503

Pain Secretary - 0161 778 3622

### **Rochdale**

Day Surgery - 01706 517132/517133

Pain Secretary - 01706 517705

### **NMGH**

Day Surgery - 0161 720 2240

Pain Secretary - 0161 720 2520





**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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