



A guide to...

CT Guided Lumbar Root Block *Patient Information*

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CT Guided Lumbar Nerve Root Block

What is a lumbar nerve root block?

It is an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid around the origin of a nerve as it leaves the spinal cord in the small of your back on its way to your leg. It is carried out under CT guidance.

Why am I having this procedure?

Injecting local anaesthetic and steroid anti-inflammatory around the spinal cord can help decrease swelling and inflammation. This may help reduce your pain and abnormal sensations in your leg and it may also improve the movement of your back and leg.

Are there any risks?

Occasionally, you may develop a headache. If you take painkillers and drink lots of water, it should settle on its own. If your headache persists beyond 24 hours, please seek medical advice. Other risks are rarer and may include infection, bleeding, temporary worsening of the pain, nerve damage and lowering in blood pressure (with light headedness and nausea).

There is a very small risk of spinal cord damage. Your leg may feel weak after the procedure. If there are any serious complications, we may need to admit you into hospital.

As the CT scanner uses X-Rays, the scan does involve a very small risk from the Radiation involved. Your doctor will have balanced the risk with the benefit gained from the nerve root block.

PLEASE INFORM THE CT DEPARTMENT IF YOU ARE ON ANY BLOOD THINNING TREATMENT

What will happen on the day of the injection?

The radiographer who carries out the CT scan will ask you to get changed into a gown. The radiologist (doctor) will explain the procedure to you and offer you the chance to ask questions. You will then be asked to lie on your front on the CT table.

A CT scan of your back will be taken and the position for the needle injection marked on your back. The small of your back will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and local anaesthetic will be injected into your skin. This will sting like a bee sting. You may feel a pushing sensation as the needle is adjusted into the right place.

CT scans of the area will be done to guide the radiologist into the correct place to inject the steroid. X-ray dye may be used to help identify the correct position of the needle. You may feel pressure or discomfort as the solution of local anaesthetic and steroid is injected. The needle will then be removed, your back will be cleaned and a dressing will be applied to the area where the injection has been given. This should all take approximately 45 minutes.

What happens afterwards?

We will help you get up slowly from the CT table as your back and legs may feel a bit stiff. Sometimes patients feel a little faint, dizzy or nauseous. Swinging your legs for 20 minutes helps alleviate these symptoms.

As local anaesthetic has been administered around a nerve, your leg may feel numb, heavy, clumsy, weak or even cold. This feeling usually disappears in approximately 20-40 minutes.

You should see your referring doctor four to five weeks after the nerve root injection.

YOU SHOULD BRING SOMEONE WITH YOU OR ARRANGE TO BE PICKED UP AS YOU SHOULD NOT DRIVE FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.