

for some people the injections are not helpful. It can take a few weeks for the injection to be effective, so please be patient and give it time to work. It is very important to understand that as your leg pain improves after the injection, you need to start regular exercise and to begin normal movement again. This combination of injection and exercise gives the best chance for long term improvement in your back complaint.

Contact numbers

Mr. Chan's secretary 01392 403696

Mr. Hutton's secretary 01392 403568

Mr. Khan's secretary 01392 406352

Mr. Clarke's secretary 01392 406352

Here to help

Our **Health Information Centre (HIC)** provides advice and information on a wide range of health-related topics.

We also offer:

- Services for people with disabilities.
- Information in large print, Braille and Easy Read formats.
- Information on audio tape and CD-ROM.
- A service to provide information in a language other than English.

Contact the **HIC** on: **01392 402071**

For **RD&E** services log on to:
www.rdehospital.nhs.uk

Smoking is not allowed by anyone on any of the RD&E sites.

For information on how to stop smoking, see your GP before coming into hospital or phone the **Stop Smoking Service** on **0845 111 1142**. This is a local service run by NHS Devon.

Patients and visitors involved in, or witness to, an accident on Trust property are encouraged to report it immediately to a staff member so that the matter can be properly reported and dealt with.

Reference Number: TO 09 002 002

October 2012 (review date: October 2015)

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

© **Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust**

Designed by the Graphics Department, RD&E

Nerve Root Injections for the Lumbar Spine

Royal Devon and Exeter 
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information

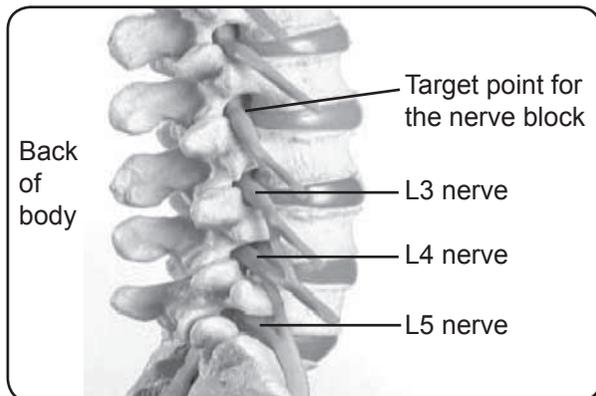
Nerve Root Block Injections for the Lumbar Spine

Respond Deliver & Enable

You have been listed for an injection called a lumbar nerve root block. You are likely to be complaining of pain in one or both of your legs which is thought to be caused by irritation or inflammation of the nerves in the bottom part of your spine. This injection can reduce inflammation and provide pain relief, and also help to clarify where your leg pain is coming from.

About the Procedure

The injection is performed as a day-case procedure and may be performed with you awake. It may be performed in the orthopaedic operating theatres, in the pain clinic or in the radiology department. You will be lying on your stomach. X-rays are used to help guide the needle to the nerve root. The injection consists of a local anaesthetic and some steroid solution being placed around the nerve (see diagram).



View of lumbar spine (low back) from the side

You will be allowed home soon after the procedure but will need someone to take you.

Following the Procedure

Sometimes, after having a nerve block procedure, your back or leg may feel stiff, weak or numb for a few hours. Please ask one of the staff to help you get up after the operation. You should not drive on the day of the injection. We would like you to gradually return to your normal activities after the injection and you should return to work as soon as possible, and if you were working up until the time of the injection, you should be able to return to work the following day. If you were taking tablets for pain relief before the injection, please continue to do so afterwards until you are able to tell if the injection has helped you. If it has, please discuss reducing your use of painkilling tablets with your GP.

We will usually see you again in the out-patient clinic a few weeks later to find out if the procedure has helped. It is important that you keep a record of whether you feel the injection helped, both on the day it was performed and also over the next few weeks.

Risks of the Injections

There are very few risks associated with nerve root block injections. Some patients find the injections uncomfortable. This is a temporary problem. Some patients may get a headache, and some patients temporarily find their symptoms are worse for a short period. Other rare risks include allergic reaction to the medication used, injury to the nerves or coating around the nerves, infection and bleeding.

It is important to tell us if you are a diabetic, as the steroid solution can affect your blood sugar levels and if you are, you must monitor your blood sugar closely after the injection.

If you notice redness or swelling around the injection site, or if you develop a high temperature, or if you feel generally unwell after the injection, contact your GP immediately.

How Effective are the Injections?

The effectiveness of the injections is variable. For some people it can get rid of their leg pain permanently, and for others for weeks or months. Unfortunately, no treatment is guaranteed to work, and