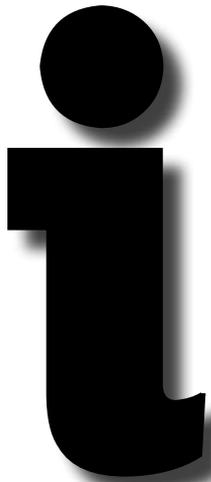


Steroid caudal epidural injections (page 1 of 2)



What is a caudal epidural injection?

A Cortisone type preparation (which is an anti-inflammatory steroid (not the same as that used by body builders) diluted with saline given by injection near the tailbone to reduce inflammation and ease pain in the sciatic nerve roots and lower back. This is a different procedure from epidurals given during childbirth. This steroid will not give you the physical side effects associated with long-term tablet use.

Why do I need an epidural?

Research has shown that epidural injections can help some patients with low back pain and sciatica that haven't responded to other treatments.

What are the common side effects?

Side effects are rare, tend to be mild, short lived and don't occur in everyone. They can include mild facial redness, feelings of unsteadiness and tiredness, headaches and a bruised sensation in the back. Women may find they miss their next period, or have it late. People with diabetes may notice a rise in blood sugar levels for around 48 hours after the injection.

More serious side effects are extremely rare, but can include infection, allergic reactions, nerve damage, and bleeding in the epidural space.

What are the alternative treatments?

It is very likely, that if an epidural has been offered to you, you will already have tried other treatments and that they have not worked well for you. If you do not want to go ahead with this treatment, the doctor will discuss with you other treatments that are available.

What are the chances of success?

We cannot predict whether the epidural injection will help your pain as no two back conditions are the same. Between 4 and 7 out of 10 patients get some degree of benefit from an epidural.

Can I continue taking my normal medication?

If you are taking Warfarin, clopidogrel, rivaroxaban, apixaban, dabigatran or any other blood thinning medication you **must** let the doctor know beforehand as these may need to be stopped or the dose altered before the procedure. Please contact us by telephoning the consultant's secretary on 01722 336262 ext 2050 as soon as possible so that we can advise you.

Please take your other medication as usual and bring a list of medicines that you are taking with you when you come for your appointment.

Pain Clinic
01722 336262 ext 2050

If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

What will happen on the day?

We understand people often feel nervous about injections. Please do not feel afraid to tell us your worries or ask any questions. If you decide that you do not want the injection, please tell the doctor who will be happy to discuss other forms of treatment with you.

- On the day of the injection, you may eat and drink as normal and take your normal medications.
- You will be assessed by a doctor who will explain the procedure to you. Please mention any other medical problems you have (such as diabetes) and tell us if you are allergic to anything.
- The procedure will be done in a treatment room. Once you are lying down, the doctor will give a small injection of a local anaesthetic (similar to a dentist's injection), to numb the area where the epidural will take place.
- The epidural medicine is then given over a few minutes. You may experience feelings of pressure or discomfort in your back or legs while this is happening. This tends to be very short lived, but if it does become uncomfortable, please tell the doctor who can slow down the injection, or stop until you are ready to continue.
- A small plaster will be placed over the site of the injection to protect it for a few hours, after which time you can remove it.
- You will be in the department for about 20 minutes, and as soon as you feel able, you may go home. You cannot drive yourself home and will need somebody to accompany you home.
- The doctor will discuss any aftercare with you and write to your GP.
- You will be given a printed aftercare advice sheet to take home with you and a post injection questionnaire. This should be completed two months after the injection and returned to the Consultant.

What should I do after the procedure?

- You can return to your normal routine as soon as you wish after the epidural. It is sensible, to treat your back with care for the next few days (i.e. avoid any undue strain such as heavy lifting or strenuous exercise). You may find it helpful to notify your workplace in advance.
- Your back may feel a little sore or tender for the next couple of days. This should settle with time. Some people find their backs take longer to get over the injection, and the pain may worsen for a few days. Please carry on with your normal painkillers or other medication if you need to.
- You can bath or shower as normal after the epidural.

Further advice

- If you are concerned about any symptoms after the epidural, please read the information sheet given to you at the appointment and if necessary, contact your GP, or go to your nearest Emergency Department.