

# Caudal Epidural Steroid Injection

Day Surgery Unit



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet will help you to understand more about a caudal epidural steroid injection. If you have any further questions or if there is anything you do not understand, please feel free to ask any of the nurses or your doctor.

## **What is a caudal epidural steroid injection?**

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A caudal epidural injection is a steroid injection into the bottom of the spine (bottom of the back) known as the epidural space. This steroid injection is an anti-inflammatory injection which can help to reduce pain and inflammation.

## **Why is the injection carried out?**

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A caudal epidural injection is most generally given to people who are experiencing pain in the buttocks, legs and back. Typical cause for this pain can be; arthritis, inflammation of the nerves or an injury. The injection can help to improve mobility, reduce pain, improve function and can also help facilitate physiotherapy.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

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You may have discussed any alternative methods of managing the pain prior to the procedure, however these can include:

- Core strengthening exercises. These may enable you to self-manage your problem in the longer term.
- Medications, including painkillers can also be of benefit.

## How is the injection done?

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Caudal epidurals are usually carried out under sedation. However the procedure can be completed under local anaesthetic if you have other medical problems that would prevent sedation.

As the injection will be administered into your lower back you will be required to lie flat on your front. If you have any concerns or problems lying in this position please inform the doctor or nurse.

The site of the injection will be cleaned with an antiseptic and then a local anaesthetic will be administered to numb the area. After this, a needle is inserted into the bottom of your back and the injection will then be delivered to the caudal epidural area.

## What are the effects?

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It is important to understand that the pain relief from the injection may take a few days or even up to three weeks to have an effect. Some patients do get more pain relief than others and some patients may not get any relief at all. Injection treatments followed by exercise and stretching increase the chances of long term success greatly.

## What are the side effects?

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As with all medical procedures, there are potential side effects, some of which are listed below. However, epidural steroid injections are straightforward and safe.

- For a short time you may experience worsening of back and leg pain. There may also be some bruising to the area and tenderness to the skin. Please continue to take your usual pain killers as prescribed. Also try applying an ice pack to the painful area.
- The epidural can affect the nerves that supply your bladder. This can lead to difficulty in passing urine (known as retention). Your bladder function will return to normal after a few hours when the local anaesthetic solution wears off.
- Diabetic patients commonly need an increase in their insulin requirements for several days after the injection. Your diabetes clinical nurse specialist can advise you on this.

## **What happens after the injection?**

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You may experience some numbness and heaviness in your legs and body for a few hours after the injection. This is a common effect caused by the steroid injection and the local anaesthetic. The nursing staff will advise you when you can begin walking around, therefore please remain on the bed until otherwise directed. You will be able to leave hospital once you are able to walk safely and to pass urine.

**If you have had sedation, you should not drive for 24 hours. Please ensure you have a responsible person accompanying you on leaving the hospital and at home for the first night.**

## **When can I return to normal activities?**

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We recommend that you take things easy for a few days after the procedure. You can then start with gentle exercise and stretching.

## **Are there any alternative treatments?**

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Alternative treatment will have already been discussed with you prior to this procedure.

## **What happens next?**

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If a follow up appointment or further treatment is required, you will be contacted either by post or telephone.

## Reference source

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- [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets/Anaesthetics/Anaesthetic%20surgery\\_caudal-epidural-steroid-injection.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets/Anaesthetics/Anaesthetic%20surgery_caudal-epidural-steroid-injection.htm)
- [www.londonorthopaedic.com/caudal-epidural/](http://www.londonorthopaedic.com/caudal-epidural/)
- [www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PIN1105\\_Pain\\_injections-Discharge\\_advice\\_A5\\_w.pdf](http://www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PIN1105_Pain_injections-Discharge_advice_A5_w.pdf)





## Contact details

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If you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Day Surgery Unit

**Telephone:** 01483 406783 (Monday–Friday, 8.30am–7.30pm)

### Out of hours advice

**Telephone:** Call 111 (formerly NHS Direct)

**Website:** [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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