

Suprascapular nerve injection

Radiology

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

Why have I been offered a nerve injection?

Your specialist has diagnosed you with a painful shoulder condition, which can make it hard to move your arm or do daily tasks. The injection may help reduce the pain.

What is the suprascapular nerve?

There is a nerve in each shoulder called the suprascapular nerve.

This nerve helps you feel things in your shoulder, including pain.

What is a suprascapular nerve injection?

This injection has a local anaesthetic (to make the area numb) and a steroid (to help reduce pain and swelling).

A radiologist will use an ultrasound machine to guide the needle to the right place.

What happens during the injection?

- You will sit or lie on the ultrasound bed in a comfortable position.
- The skin on your shoulder will be cleaned.
- A small amount of numbing medicine (anaesthetic) will be used. This may sting for a few seconds.
- The doctor will use a thin needle to inject steroid and more anaesthetic into your shoulder.

Are there any risks?

This is a relatively safe procedure but there is a small risk of bleeding.

Tell the radiologist if you take blood thinning tablets (anticoagulants) like warfarin, aspirin, or clopidogrel.

Steroid injections are usually not given more than three times a year because they can sometimes cause:

- an increased risk of an infection at the injection site
- higher blood sugar (if you have diabetes)
- you to feel hungrier and gain weight
- dimpling of the skin at the site of the injection

If you have allergies to any medicines, please tell the doctor.

What will it feel like?

After the skin is numb, you might feel **pressure or pushing**, but you should not feel sharp pain. Tell the radiologist if you do.

After the injection

- Your shoulder may feel sore for a short time.
- Do not drive or use heavy machines for 24 hours.
- It is helpful to do stretching exercises to keep your shoulder moving.

How well does it work?

The injection helps about 2 out of 3 people.

You may feel quick relief from the numbing medicine.

The steroid takes up to two weeks to work and may help for weeks or months.

Some people do not feel any improvement.

Each person responds differently to the injections and the effect will not be known until you have had the injection.

Will I be in pain?

Your shoulder may be sore for a few days.

You can take painkillers (such as **paracetamol or ibuprofen**) to ease the pain.

After a few days, you should expect the pain to improve as the steroid starts to work.

When can I resume my normal activities?

Try to use your shoulder gently and build up slowly.

Stay active, but stop if the pain feels too much.

When can I return to work / sport?

This depends on your job and how you feel.

Do not use machinery or do any dangerous activities for at least 24 hours.

When can I drive?

You should only drive when you can lift your arm to shoulder height and control the wheel safely. Also, please check your car insurance policy.

This is just a guide and you can discuss it with the doctor or physiotherapist at your outpatient appointment.

Contact

Ultrasound – 01925 275588

Hospital switchboard – 01925 635911

Website: www.northcheshireandmersey.nhs.uk/

NHS website: www.nhs.uk