

## Pain Service

# Guanethidine Block

### What is a Guanethidine Block?

Guanethidine is a drug that can be used intravenously to treat certain painful conditions known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). This syndrome is thought to be associated with the sympathetic nervous system and controls the automatic functions of our body, including the heart rate, blood pressure and skin temperature.

### Before the procedure

- Treatment takes place as an outpatient at the Ely day Surgery Unit or Addenbrookes Pain Clinic Treatment Room.
- Your stay may be around two to four hours. Before any treatment begins you will be asked to provide assurance that someone is able to drive you home if you after your injections.
- You will have a morning or an afternoon appointment.
- Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you and ask you to sign a consent form.
- You will be asked to undress and change into a theatre gown and your blood pressure and pulse will be recorded.

### The procedure

**This information leaflet is to be read in conjunction with the leaflet titled 'Advice to be read before your Pain Clinic injection treatment'.**

- You will rest on one of the trolleys.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be taken.
- The doctor will insert two needles into your veins. One will be to give the Guanethidine into your painful limb (arm or leg), and the other for sedation if you require it.
- The painful limb will be protected with soft padding and a cuff, similar to a blood pressure cuff, is applied. This will be inflated while you raise your limb.
- The doctor will then inject the Guanethidine through one of the needles on the side of your painful limb.
- The blood circulation is restricted because of the inflated cuff and so the drug stays in the affected arm or leg.

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## Following the treatment

- After 20 minutes the Guanethidine will be fully absorbed and the air is let out of the cuff.
- You may feel intense heat and pins and needles in your arm/leg but this, along with any giddiness, will wear off quickly.
- After 30 minutes you will be offered light refreshment and also encouraged to move the limb.

**Please ensure that you have arranged for someone to drive you home after this procedure. Failure to do so will result in your procedure being cancelled.**

**If you have had sedation, we recommend that you arrange for someone to stay with you overnight and that you do not drive for 24 hours.**

## What to expect afterwards

- You may feel giddy or faint but this feeling will wear off by the following day.
- If you notice a reduction in your pain after this procedure it is a good idea to exercise your arm / leg to reduce muscle stiffness and improve circulation.

## Follow up

A letter will be sent to your GP and one of the nurses will telephone you in approximately four weeks.

## Points to remember

- Please bring your glasses if you need them for reading.
- Always bring a list of all current medication.
- Continue taking all your usual medication on treatment day unless advised to omit anything by the Pain Clinic.
- If there is any possibility you may be pregnant please inform the doctor or nurse.

## Additional information

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you require more information or have any questions please speak to your doctor or contact the Pain Clinic.

Telephone number: 01223 217796



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

## Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact

Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



## Document history

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