

Chronic Pain Clinic

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.
- Your stay may be between two to four hours and before any treatment begins you will be asked to provide assurance that someone is able to drive you home.
- You will have a morning or an afternoon appointment.
- On arrival, you will be asked to complete questionnaires as part of an audit and to record improvements in pain levels.
- A doctor will then discuss the procedure with you and ask you to sign a consent form.

The procedure

- 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.

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



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. You cannot smoke on site. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

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Portuguese

Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Russian

若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

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Turkish

এই তথ্য বাংলায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও টেপে পেতে চাইলে দয়া করে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করুন বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করুন।

Bengali

Document history

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