

Patient Information: Prolotherapy Injection

What is Prolotherapy?

Ligaments in the **spine** and **pelvis** provide stability to the joints and discs. These ligaments can be overstretched or torn putting extra stress on the spine which causes pain.

Prolotherapy (also called **Sclerosant injections**) work by causing minor ligament injury through injection of an irritant solution, thereby causing mild inflammation of the injected tissues. This is thought to stimulate a healing process leading to the body producing new fibres, making the affected ligament thicker and stronger.

What does it involve?

- You will be lying on your front for the procedure, which usually takes **10 - 20 minutes**. **Local anaesthetic** is injected to numb the skin and a fine needle is passed toward the ligaments of the back under **x-ray** guidance.
- Once the needle is confirmed to be in place, the injection takes place. Often several sites are injected during the procedure.
- Traditionally, the injection is repeated at intervals of **1 – 4 weeks**. A course of treatment usually comprises **three** procedures.

What is Injected?

- **Local Anaesthetic** – injected into the joint.
- **Irritant solution** – this may be a strong **sugar-based** solution **10 –20% glucose** or a mixture of **phenol, glycerine and glucose**.

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Does it Work?

On average between **50 – 70%** of patients find that their symptoms are improved by a **half or more** for a **year or more** following an initial course of treatment. Injections may need to be repeated on occasion, usually as a single top-up procedure. This may be required after a few months or even a few years. **Prolotherapy** appears to be particularly useful in patients with sacroiliac pain, postural low back ache or mild spinal instability.

Risks and Side Effects:

Due to the procedure:

- Infection – rare.
- More discomfort for the first few days after your injection.
- Bruising to the injection area.
- A feeling of skin sensitivity in part of the buttock occurs rarely and takes some months to settle.
- Allergy to injected medication.

What Happens on the Day of My Appointment?

- **You can eat and drink.**
- Take all your tablets as normal. Bring a list of your tablets with you.
- A nurse will take some details from you to check that you are fit for your procedure.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form. The doctor will be able to answer any questions you may have at this time.
- You will be at the **Day Unit** or **radiology** department for about **1 - 2 hours**. This time may vary depending on unforeseen circumstances.

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- Please bring a **dressing gown** and **sensible footwear** with you. You will be asked to walk to the treatment room on the Day Unit.
- After you have had your procedure, you will need to stay with us for about **30 minutes** before you can go home.

You must **NOT** drive home or go home on public transport.
Please arrange for someone to collect you from the Day Unit.
You are allowed to go home by taxi.

After Your Injection

- Take things easy for the rest of the day. Do not do any excessive exercise or heavy work for the first few days.
- Remove the dressing the next morning.
- Continue to take your pain tablets till you notice any improvement in your symptoms.

Important Information

Please inform the Day Unit if you are **diabetic**, have a **cough** or **cold** or have any kind of **infection**.

You must inform us if you are taking any of the following tablets – **antibiotics**, **aspirin**, **warfarin** or **clopidogrel** before attending as some of these may need to be stopped some days before.

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Information for females - We will need to know the start date of your last menstrual period due to the use of x-ray equipment. If you think you might be pregnant, contact the Day Unit for advice.

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