

Patient Information: Sacroiliac Joint Injection

What is a Sacroiliac Joint Injection?

Sacroiliac joints are joints that join the lowest part of the spine, the sacrum to the pelvis. There is one on each side. They help to support weight and act as a suspension when walking. The joints can become inflamed causing pain. A **steroid injection** into the sacroiliac joints can help to relieve the pain by **reducing the inflammation**.

What does it involve?

- You will be lying on your front for the procedure, which usually takes **10-20 minutes**. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin and a fine needles is passed toward the joint under **x-ray** guidance.
- Once the needle is confirmed to be in the joint, the injection takes place.

What is Injected?

- A small quantity of **dye** (which can be seen on the **xray images**) is used to confirm that the injection is into the joint.
- **Local Anaesthetic** – injected into the joint.
- **Steroid** – injected into the joint.

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Does it Work?

The injection is used primarily to **diagnose** the source of your pain. The **local anaesthetic** numbs the joint so if the **sacroiliac joint** is the source of pain, you should experience significant pain relief within **15 minutes** of the injection, which may last for a few hours. Again, IF the sacroiliac joint is a source of pain then there may be some prolonged pain relief from the steroid which may last over **6 months** in about a **quarter** of patients. More often the pain returns within days, weeks or a few months after the procedure in which case it may be repeated or you may undergo a potentially longer lasting treatments such as **prolotherapy** or **radiofrequency denervation (rhizolysis)**.

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.
- Leg numbness and weakness are very rare side effects.
- Temporary difficulty taking weight through the injected side.
- Allergy to injected medication.

Due to the injected steroid:

- Facial flushing for a few days.
- Temporary alteration of your usual menstrual cycle (females).
- Temporary increase in your sugar levels (diabetics).

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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.
- 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.

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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.

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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