

# Sacroiliac joint injections



## Information for patients

This information leaflet explains sacroiliac joint injections. It includes the risks, the benefits and the alternatives. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of the team caring for you.

### Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

**If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.**

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

## What are sacroiliac joint injections?

They are a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid which is injected in to the joint between your hip bone (iliac crest) and sacrum, a triangular bone between your lower your lumbar spine and tailbone (coccyx). The area surrounding the joint contains nerves which send pain signals to your brain.

### Consent

We must by law obtain your written consent to any operation and some other procedures beforehand. Staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a senior member of staff again.

## Why do I need sacroiliac joint injections?

Having sacroiliac injections can:

- Reduce inflammation or swelling around the nerves in your sacroiliac joint and so ease pain.
- Help us to find the source of your pain. If the injections help to greatly reduce your pain for a short time, we will consider offering you another procedure called radiofrequency denervation. This aims to give you longer lasting pain relief. It uses radio waves to produce an electric current that heats your nerves and alters how they work.
- Give you a pain-free period during which you can exercise and have physiotherapy.

## What are the risks?

- **Failure:** in half of the cases the injections may not work well.
- **Worsening of pain:** your pain may get worse before it gets better and it can take up to 2 - 4 weeks and it is quite common.



- **Pain and bruising:** you may have pain and bruising at the site of the injections which will wear off in 3 - 5 days.
- **Effects of the steroid:** it can cause short-term effects such as a flushed face or an increase in your blood sugar if you are diabetic.
- **Infection:** this does not happen very often.
- **Leg weakness:** this happens rarely.

## Are there any alternatives?

Yes, you can manage your pain with medications and exercises.

## What happens during the procedure?

We will ask you to lie face down on a bed and then carefully position you. We will clean the area where we are going to inject you (injection site) and drape sterile cloth around the area.

We will give you a local anaesthetic injection to numb your skin before you have the sacroiliac joint injection. If you would like conscious sedation or gas and air, Please discuss with the clinician on your outpatient appointment visit.

## How long does the procedure take?

It can take up to/between 15 - 30 minutes but in certain circumstances it can take longer. You will be at the hospital for 3 - 4 hours but you will not stay overnight.

## What happens after the procedure?

We will move you to the recovery area, where the nurse will check your heart rate and blood pressure. If all is well, you will be moved back to the ward and reviewed by our Pain Consultant before we discharge you home.

You will need someone to accompany you home and look after you for the first 24hrs.

## **Will I have a follow-up appointment?**

Depending on how successful the procedure has been, one of three things will happen.

1. We will discharge you from our care.
2. We will book you in for another procedure, radiofrequency denervation.
3. We will ask you to come to the Pain Clinic to be seen by our Pain Team.

## **Who can I contact with queries or concerns?**

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Pain office on 020 3299 3605.

## **Sharing your information**

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

## **Care provided by students**

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.



## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. The PALS office is on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you. PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS.

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at  
**[www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals)**

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.**



