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## PROCEDURE NAME

Chemical Sympathectomy

## PROCEDURE CODE

5719

## INTRODUCTION

This leaflet will provide you and your relatives with information about Chemical Sympathectomy procedures. It includes information on the treatment, the risks and benefits of the procedure involved.

## CHEMICAL SYMPATHECTOMY

This procedure targets a chain of nerves, the sympathetic nerves, which run down the front of the backbone, close to, but outside the spinal column. This procedure promotes prolonged pain relief however in some patients, the procedure is not successful.

The procedure will take place as a day case and does not require a general anaesthetic.

## BENEFITS

A Chemical Sympathectomy injection is one method used to provide pain relief by blocking the pain-inducing sympathetic nerves in the lumbar (lower) region of the back. Sympathetic nerves can be responsible for pain we experience from an injury, long after the injury has healed.

The procedure involves numbing these nerves by injecting a drug called Phenol or Alcohol directly into them.

## SIDE EFFECTS/RISKS

Backaches may occur at the needle insertion site, and you may experience increased pain after a few hours however this is usually transient and settles shortly after the procedure. Bleeding, infection, allergy to dye and organ injury are all very rare side effects.

## **BEFORE THE PROCEDURE**

- You will be required to fast for 6 hours prior to your admission from food.
- You will be required to fast for 2 hours prior to admission from water.
- Take your normal medications on the morning of your procedure.
- Please contact my office immediately if you are currently taking blood thinners such as **Xarelto (Rivaroxaban), Eliquis (Apixaban), Plavix (Clopidogrel), Pradaxa (Dabigatran) or if you are pregnant.**
- Please also advise if you are taking any diabetic medication.
- Upon admission, the procedure will be discussed with you again and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

## **THE PROCEDURE (15-20 MINUTES)**

- This is carried out in the theatre while you are awake.
- You may be offered sedation through an injection into the back of your hand to help you to relax.
- Your injection site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. Sterile sheets will then be placed around the area. A local anaesthetic will be injected to numb the area.
- X-ray/Ultrasound will be used to ensure proper positioning of the injecting needle. You may feel a bit of pressure and a sting in the area.
- If you feel any discomfort during the procedure, please tell a member of the theatre team.
- Once completed, a plaster will be placed over the injection site, and you will then be taken to the recovery area.

## **AFTER THE PROCEDURE**

- In the recovery area, you will be observed for 30 to 60 minutes.
- You need to have somebody to accompany you home.
- Do not stop your usual pain killers.
- The plaster can be removed after 24 hours, and you can then have a bath or shower as normal. Before the plaster is removed, avoid getting the injection site wet.
- Re-engage in physical activities as soon as you can.
- You will be contacted about a follow-up appointment for 4-6 weeks' time, or you can book directly by visiting [www.drdeborahgalvin.ie](http://www.drdeborahgalvin.ie)

Please report immediately to your GP / my office or attend the Emergency Department if you have serious concerns outside office hours.