

## **Patient information - Intravenous Guanethidine Regional Block (ivG)**

### **What is a Guanethidine regional block?**

Guanethidine is a drug that can be injected intravenously (injected into a vein) to treat painful limb conditions such as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). The pain condition is thought to be associated with over activity of the sympathetic nervous system. These nerves normally control the blood supply, colour, temperature, sweating and skin texture of the limb.

In certain disorders, for example after injury, this part of the nervous system becomes overactive. People with CRPS will have different symptoms affecting one of their limbs, including: Severe burning pain, Pain and swelling made worse by using the limb, Sensitivity of the limb, Weakness and muscle wasting, Feeling of hot or cold, Sweating, Colour changes, Altered hair and nail growth

You may be offered a course of up to three treatments at regular intervals. Your progress will be assessed by the doctor at the time of your visit.

### **Benefits**

Some patients will experience relief of their symptoms after a course of ivG, including reduction in the pain and swelling in the affected limb.

### **Risks**

Unfortunately no procedure is risk free. There is a possibility that you may have an allergic reaction to the drugs used. You may feel dizzy for a while due to the injected medicines.

We do not recommend this treatment for people with serious kidney problems, uncontrolled high blood pressure, serious heart problems or during pregnancy.

### **Before the procedure**

- You will have the treatment as a day case.
- You are advised not to eat for about 4 hours prior to the planned time. You may drink clear fluids (water, squashes, ginger ale, black coffee or tea) until 2 hours before the procedure.
- You should arrange for someone to drive you home after your injection.
- The procedure takes 30-45 minutes; your stay may vary between two to four hours.
- Please bring a list of your current medications with you.
- Your doctor will discuss the procedure with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If there is any possibility that you may be pregnant please inform

the doctor or nurse.

### **The procedure**

- You will rest on one of the trolleys.
- Your blood pressure and pulse will be taken at regular intervals.
- The doctor will place 2 plastic cannulae into veins, one in the back of the hand and another in the affected limb.
- The affected limb will be protected by soft padding and a tourniquet (similar to a blood pressure cuff) is applied. This will then be inflated.
- The doctor will then inject a local anaesthetic and the guanethidine through the plastic cannula in the affected limb. The local anaesthetic numbs your limb and the guanethidine temporarily interrupts the sympathetic nerve supply to the limb.
- The blood circulation is restricted because of the inflated cuff and so the drug stays in the affected limb.
- The tourniquet will be removed after about 20 minutes.
- The venflon will be removed and a dressing placed over the needle site. This can be removed later in the day at home.

### **Following the procedure**

- After the procedure the nursing staff will observe you before going home.
- Your limb may look pale and mottled whilst the tourniquet is on. When the tourniquet is removed your treated limb may look red and feel warm. This is normal and will wear off quickly.
- You may feel weak and tired after the procedure this should wear off by the following day. We advise that you do not drive a car or operate machinery, sign any legal documents or drink alcohol for 24hrs.
- Take your regular medication and pain killers as normal.
- If you notice a reduction in your pain after this procedure it is a good idea to exercise your limb to help reduce the stiffness and to improve the circulation.
- A letter will be sent to your GP and a further appointment at the pain clinic will be sent to you.

**Please ensure that you have arranged for someone to drive you home after this procedure.** 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 prior to the consent for the procedure.