

Patient Information Leaflet

## **Advice following root block for chronic pain relief**

**Produced By: Pain Clinic**

**May 2013  
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**If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Quality Team, telephone 01983 534850, who will advise you.**

When discharged after root block you may still have some of the following:

- Wobbly or heavy limbs (arms/legs)
- Tingly, numb, warm or swollen arms/hands (cervical epidural), tummy or chest (thoracic epidural) or legs/feet (lumbar or caudal epidural)
- A sore/painful injection site
- Headache, mild vision blurring; the headache should have improved at least somewhat after paracetamol.

**These effects are expected to wear off gradually over the next 24-48 hours.**

If you had a **headache** and this persists or gets worse, while improving temporarily when lying down this may be due to a dura perforation. Please contact the pain clinic (534722) or out of hours attend A&E if severe. While not urgent, this can be treated with a blood patch injection. Until you are seen, try to drink plenty of fluid, take standard pain killers and avoid getting up as much as possible.

As explained before your procedure, your existing pain may worsen for while. If it is severe do less/rest for a few days, but try not to stay sitting or lying for too long as this will stiffen your spine and make re-mobilisation more difficult.

Consider to take standard pain killers (Paracetamol, anti-inflammatories, Codeine or Tramadol) during this period. Even if these haven't helped your chronic pain, these are usually helpful for initial soreness.

**Other recommendations:**

- Do not drive yourself while you have reduced sensation of power/control of a limb!
- Be careful while your limb is numb as you may not feel pain/sharpness/temperature/pressure properly. While numb, we recommend to rest and be mindful of the limb position (changing it regularly) and avoid sharp/hot objects getting close to the limb.
- Take it easy for the remainder of the day and resume normal activities as you feel able
- Someone should be with you in the evening and overnight
- Keep the dressing/plaster in place until the next day

**If better:**

- Very important: gradually increase your exercises or physical activities that have been restricted by your pain. Do so in a paced way, don't abruptly do too much.
- Reduce pain killers gradually, matching your remaining pain intensity. Start with opioids (Tramadol, Morphine, Buprenorphine, Codeine, Dihydrocodeine, Fentanyl), anti-inflammatories and those drugs that give you most side effects. Wean off *slowly*, as

otherwise withdrawal symptoms may result. If your pain eventually returns, you can restart the same pain killers – often you will find them more effective than before.

Please carefully note any change in your symptoms/pain and for how long the relief effect lasts. These outcomes will determine further treatment options and will be looked at your next review.

A follow up appointment will be made for you by the clinic receptionist and sent to you.

If you feel you need to talk to a member of the Chronic Pain Team ring (01983) 534722 during office hours; alternatively contact your GP.

You will find more information about chronic pain problems on our website at <http://www.iow.nhs.uk/Trust/Department/chronicpain/index.asp>.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues through NHS interactive available through Sky TV or online at: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: 111

### **We Value Your Views On Our Service**

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Quality Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive  
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust  
St Mary's Hospital  
Newport  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 03000 61 61 61 or at [enquires@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquires@cqc.org.uk)

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.

Ref: **A/RB/2**