

# Radio frequency lesioning



**Information for patients**  
Pain Management Service



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





## **Radio frequency lesioning**

As part of your treatment, it has been suggested that you may benefit from a treatment called radio-frequency lesioning. It is difficult to say how much this treatment may help your pain as each individual responds differently. This written information will try to answer some of your questions.

It is impossible for this kind of leaflet to cover all the information about radio frequency lesioning that you may need or want. However, we hope that you will find it helps to remind you about things you have already been told.

If after reading this leaflet you are unclear about anything or would like more information then please ask us when you come in for treatment or contact the Pain Clinic between 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday on **0114 271 2493**.

### **Do I need to stay overnight in hospital to have radio frequency lesioning?**

Not usually, however, we ask everyone to bring an overnight bag in with them as we find people are more comfortable wearing their own nightwear, slippers and dressing gown. Plus, if you do need to be admitted, as can sometimes happen, then you also have everything you need.

### **Where is radio frequency lesioning done?**

The procedure is carried out in the X-ray Department or in a small theatre in the Day Case Centre.

## **What is radio frequency lesioning?**

Also known as radio frequency ablation or RF, radio frequency lesioning involves a machine that sends heat through a needle, which temporarily destroys the nerve endings that are causing you pain.

## **How will radio frequency lesioning help me?**

Radio frequency lesioning may be carried out when other pain relief options have been tried such as a nerve block. The aim is to temporarily reduce your pain.

Individuals respond differently to this treatment and we cannot guarantee that it will reduce your pain. Your doctor will explain the treatment in more detail, including any potential risks and other treatments that may be available.

## **How is radio frequency lesioning performed?**

The treatment can take approximately 20 minutes to 1 hour. If you are admitted to the day case centre then we use a small theatre to carry out the treatment. We carry out the treatment using X-rays to guide us. X-rays help the doctor to see exactly where the needle is placed.

## **Will it hurt?**

There may be some discomfort involved. However, the doctor will numb the affected area by injecting a local anaesthetic.

## **What happens afterwards?**

After your treatment a number of things happen. You will recover in day case recovery.

When you are recovered, you will be able to have something to eat and drink before you go home.

A small dressing will be applied to the area that has been treated. You will be able to take this off the following day.

## **Are there any risks?**

As with any treatment, there are risks. The doctor will discuss these more fully with you before you sign your consent form giving us permission to carry out the treatment. Only sign the consent form if you are completely sure you understand the treatment you are having. If you are unsure of anything please ask someone to explain it again.

## **Are there any side effects?**

There may be some side effects from the treatment; these include:

- Numb legs / arms / hands
- Difficulty passing urine
- Low blood pressure

These problems tend not to last long, but we may sometimes decide it is better to admit you until the side effects have worn off. This would mean staying in hospital overnight. We would especially do this if the numbness affects your walking or you are unable to pass urine.

If your blood pressure is lowered then we would treat this by giving you extra fluids by a drip.

## **Infection**

Anyone having an injection through the skin is at risk of infection. However, this is very rare. Before you go home, we will tell you what symptoms you should watch out for and what to do if you think you may have developed an infection.

## Going home after treatment

Please remember, you will need someone to collect you from the Day Case Centre after treatment, as you may feel unsteady on your feet. If you have had sedation you may also feel drowsy.

We recommend that for the first 24 hours after your treatment you:

- **do not** drive
- **do not** take public transport alone
- **do not** drink alcohol

You will also need someone to stay with you overnight. We also suggest you take 24-48 hours off work.

## How will I feel after the treatment?

It is not unusual to feel uncomfortable or have an increase in your pain for 3-4 days after the treatment, but it will settle. Continue to take your painkillers as normal.

**Finally**, this information can be used to remind you about things you have already been told. It does not mean you cannot ask further questions or ask for reassurance about anything that may be worrying you. We aim for you to be kept informed about your treatments and understand what they mean.





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