

SPINAL SURGERY SERVICES – Epidural Injection

Introduction

We have been working hard to recover elective services as quickly as possible, transforming and integrating services and how we deliver care across Somerset, following our recent merger. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written in consultation with clinicians who are responsible for your care.

An epidural injection is an injection of a steroid and/or a local anaesthetic into the space surrounding the outer protective covering of the spinal cord. It is used to help relieve back pain or sciatic pain (shooting pain from the back down one or both legs).

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your injection, keep moving and be as active as can within your limits of pain, this will be beneficial to you post operatively.

It is important that you stay as healthy as you can both physically and mentally while you wait for your injection. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this regularly reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker or drink heavily, it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping. The NHS website has lots of tools and support to help with losing weight, getting active, quitting smoking and drinking less, all of which are good for your health generally, but if you are due to have an operation, they can also help you to recover more quickly from it.

For help and support with losing weight visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/

For advice on eating well visit: www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/

For help and support with getting or keeping active visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/

For help and support with quitting smoking visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

For help and support with drinking less alcohol visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your pain or present weakness is changing, seek advice.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Contact Us

Email: spinalsurgerieservice@somersetft.nhs.uk

Telephone: The spinal 'On Call' surgeon via the switchboard 01823 333444