

After your pain procedure

Discharge advice following spinal injections, nerve blocks and radiofrequency denervation

What is normal afterwards?

Mild soreness or bruising, a temporary increase in your usual pain, and short-lived numbness or heaviness from local anaesthetic may occur. Numbness should wear off as advised by your treating team. After radiofrequency denervation, soreness or a pain flare may last several days, occasionally longer. Steroid injections may take several days to help. Benefit is not guaranteed.

If your pain is worse

Continue your usual prescribed pain relief unless advised otherwise. Paracetamol may help if safe for you: follow the packet instructions and avoid doubling up with other medicines containing paracetamol. Try a cold pack wrapped in a towel for 10-15 minutes at a time. Continue gentle movement, avoiding strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 24-48 hours or as advised. Severe, unusual or progressively worsening pain needs medical assessment.

Driving, activity and the injection site

Arrange transport home. Do not drive while affected by numbness, weakness, dizziness or medication, or until you can safely control your vehicle. If sedated, avoid driving, alcohol, machinery and important decisions for at least 24 hours; follow your hospital's instructions. Keep the site clean and dry; a small dressing can usually be removed after 24 hours unless told otherwise. Follow specific advice about diabetes, medicines and blood thinners.

Seek prompt medical advice

Contact the hospital where you had your procedure or NHS 111 the same day for increasing redness, swelling, warmth or discharge, fever or chills, worsening pain that is not responding to usual medication, or a severe headache (particularly one relieved by lying flat). New or persistent numbness or weakness also requires prompt assessment.

SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION

Go to an Emergency Department immediately for new or progressive leg weakness; difficulty passing urine or inability to empty your bladder; new loss of bladder or bowel control; new numbness around the genitals, buttocks or inner thighs (saddle numbness); or severe, rapidly worsening spinal pain, especially with fever or neurological symptoms. Do not wait for an email reply or routine appointment. Call 999 if you are seriously unwell or cannot travel safely.

Follow-up and further advice

Follow the individual discharge instructions given by your hospital, which take priority over this general information. Contact your treating hospital for concerns about recovery, or Dr Ward's practice for non-urgent questions.

General guidance only. Your treating team's specific instructions take priority. Updated October 2026.