

Pain Management Service

Sacroiliac joint denervation

What a sacroiliac joint denervation is

The **sacrum** is a large, triangular bone at the base of your spine. It connects the hip bones and the tailbone to form the back of your pelvis. The area where the sacrum joins the hip bone is called the **sacroiliac joint**. You have 2 sacroiliac joints, one on each side of the pelvis.

A **denervation** is a procedure that aims to reduce pain by interrupting the nerves that supply the sacroiliac joints. The nerves are heated (cauterised) using an electrical current from a device called a radio-frequency machine.

This procedure is usually considered after other treatments, such as sacroiliac joint steroid injections, have been tried.

Benefits

If sacroiliac joint injections gave you temporary pain relief, denervation may provide longer-lasting relief, often between 6 and 18 months.

Risks

No procedure is risk free. There is also no guarantee that this procedure will relieve your pain.

Short term side-effects include:

- Pain and discomfort where the injection was given (may last up to 3 weeks.)
- Infection, bruising or bleeding



Patient Information

- A possible reaction to the medicines used
- Temporary numbness in the buttocks or legs (this will usually settle).

Long-term effects are uncommon and include:

- Increased pain
- Permanent nerve damage, which can cause numbness or weakness

Please discuss any concerns with your consultant.

Before the procedure

- You will have the treatment as a day case.
- You will receive an appointment to attend the surgical day unit at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (Walsgrave) or at the Hospital of St Cross (Rugby).
- Arrange for someone to drive you home after your injection.
- Your stay may vary from 1 to 5.
- Bring a list of your current medicines.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. You may keep your underwear on.
- Your doctor will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form.
- The procedure may involve X-rays. If you are a female, you will be asked about your last menstrual period. If there is any chance you may be pregnant, tell the doctor or nurse.

The procedure

- The procedure is done under X-ray guidance so the doctor can identify the nerves to treat.
- A self-adhesive foil plate is placed on your thigh to complete the radio-frequency circuit.
- You will lie in the correct position, your back will be cleaned with antiseptic solution, which may feel cold.
- Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin. This may sting before the skin becomes numb. Multiple injections may be needed.
- You must keep still while the needle is inserted.

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- A thin wire is then passed through the needle.
- Sometimes two needles are used.
- The doctor may ask you to tell them when you feel a mild tingling, pain, or twitch. This confirms the needle is correctly positioned.
- The radio-frequency machine heats the nerve for about a minute to interrupt pain signals. You may feel some discomfort during this time.
- This process may be repeated at different levels
- Small dressing will be applied. You may remove them in the evening.

After the procedure

- You will be taken to a recovery room.
- Nursing staff will observe you before you go home.
- Take your regular medicines and pain killers as normal.
- Your pain may feel worse for a few days before it improves. You may need to increase your usual pain relief during this time. If your pain is not controlled, contact your GP.

Please make sure someone drives you home after this procedure.

More information

This leaflet does not replace advice from your doctor. If you have any questions, please speak to your doctor before signing the consent form.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the pain management secretaries on 024 7696 5880 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Patient Information

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