



# Greater Occipital Nerve (GON) Injection

## WHY HAVE THIS PROCEDURE?

This procedure may be offered as part of a package of care to allow your pain specialist to diagnose the cause of your pain and to help understand your pain. It may also be performed to give you some temporary relief from your pain.

Greater Occipital Nerves (GONs) are located at the back of your scalp/head above the neck, and provide feeling (or pain) to the back and top of the head.

The GON injection involves an injection into the back of the head with local anaesthetic and steroid; this injection is designed to reduce the pain produced by the GON and the steroid reduces inflammation and irritation to the nerve and surrounding structures.

This procedure may be performed in the consultation rooms of your pain specialist, and does not require sedation or an anaesthetic.

Greater Occipital Nerve injections can be helpful in diagnosing the cause of your pain and can also help reduce the pain itself.

A radiofrequency procedure may be indicated if you have a successful but short lasting GON block

## THE PROCEDURE

This procedure will be carried out in the consultation rooms or an operating theatre by one of our pain specialists.

You will most likely be seated in a chair, with your head tilted forward.

The procedure takes only a few minutes.

Your pain specialist will ensure your skin and surrounding areas are cleaned using an alcohol-based skin preparation

The injection will include local anaesthetic mixed with an anti-inflammatory steroid

Please tell your pain specialist if you experience pain during the procedure.

*Please advise your pain specialist if you take an anticoagulant or 'blood thinner', as this may need to be ceased prior to having this injection.*

## COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Light-headedness
- Slight bleeding or bruising at the injection site
- A flare up of your pain, for a short time, may occur.

## AFTER THE PROCEDURE

You will be requested to remain for 15 minutes following the injections in the waiting room, to observe for side effects from the procedure.

Following this time you can undertake regular daily activities, with no rigorous activities until the following day.

We would expect that you should feel comfortable to drive following this procedure, but you are welcome to have someone collect you and accompany you home.

## STEROID SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects of steroids can include: hot flushes, nausea, fluid retention, raised blood sugar levels and even menstrual irregularities. If you have diabetes, you should monitor your blood sugar carefully for about one week after your injection.

## RARE SIDE EFFECTS

These injections are very safe but it is important that you are aware of any side effects, even if they are rare and do not occur very commonly.

- Allergy, including severe allergic reaction.
- Numbness.
- Infection.
- Injection into a blood vessel causing a toxic reaction – very rare.

**Do not** cease your regular pain medications prior to this or any injection.