



SUPRASCAPULAR NERVE BLOCK

Information for Patients

What is a Suprascapular Nerve Block?

A suprascapular nerve block is an injection performed around the suprascapular nerve, one of the main nerves supplying sensation to the shoulder joint. The injection typically contains a local anaesthetic and a corticosteroid. It may be performed under ultrasound guidance if needed. The procedure aims to reduce shoulder pain and improve function, allowing patients to participate more effectively in physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

Why is it performed?

A suprascapular nerve block may be recommended for patients suffering from persistent shoulder pain arising from a variety of conditions, including:

- Frozen shoulder (adhesive capsulitis)
- Pain following shoulder surgery
- Rotator cuff tendinopathy
- Partial-thickness rotator cuff tears
- Irreparable rotator cuff tears
- Shoulder impingement syndrome (subacromial pain syndrome)
- Glenohumeral arthritis
- Chronic shoulder pain where other treatments have not been successful

The injection may be used both as a treatment and as a diagnostic tool to help determine the source of pain.

How does the injection work?

The suprascapular nerve carries a significant proportion of the pain signals from the shoulder joint.

By temporarily blocking these pain signals, the injection can:

- Reduce pain
- Improve shoulder movement
- Facilitate physiotherapy
- Improve sleep disturbed by shoulder pain
- Assist recovery following surgery

Although the injection can provide substantial relief, it does not cure the underlying condition.



How is the procedure performed?

The procedure is carried out in the outpatient clinic under sterile conditions.

1. You will be seated comfortably.
2. The skin over the shoulder will be cleaned with antiseptic solution.
3. Ultrasound may be used to identify the suprascapular nerve.
4. The medication is injected around the nerve with a fine needle.

The procedure usually takes approximately 10 minutes.

What can I expect after the injection?

Many patients experience pain relief within a few hours.

Some patients may initially notice temporary numbness or heaviness around the shoulder.

This is expected and usually resolves within several hours.

Pain relief may last from several weeks to several months, depending on the underlying condition.

Some patients require repeat injections or additional treatment.

Potential Benefits

- Reduction in shoulder pain
- Improved shoulder function
- Better sleep
- Improved participation in physiotherapy
- Reduced need for pain medication
- Enhanced recovery after surgery

Risks and Complications

Complications are uncommon but may include:

- Temporary pain at the injection site
- Bruising or bleeding
- Infection
- Allergic reaction
- Temporary weakness around the shoulder
- Failure to achieve pain relief

Serious complications are extremely rare.



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Aftercare

- You may return home immediately after the procedure.
- Avoid strenuous activity for the remainder of the day.
- You may return to normal activities the following day as tolerated.
- Continue any physiotherapy program unless otherwise advised.

If you develop increasing pain, redness, swelling, fever, or any concerning symptoms, please contact your doctor.

Additional Information

The response to a suprascapular nerve block varies between individuals. Some patients experience substantial and long-lasting relief, while others may experience only temporary benefits.

Your consultant will discuss whether this procedure is appropriate for your specific condition and how it fits into your overall treatment plan.



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