

Hollywood Private Hospital

Rhizotomy/Cryorhizotomy

WHAT IS A RHIZOTOMY

- This is a procedure carried out after successful facet joint injections. The facet joint injections will have identified which of the joints in your back or neck are involved in causing your pain. A rhizotomy is performed to interrupt the nerve supply to these joints by using freezing (cryorhizotomy) or using heat (radiofrequency (RF) rhizotomy).

Your hospital stay

- You will be admitted to the Day Procedure Unit (DPU) and discharged the same day following the procedure.
- If the procedure is performed under local anaesthetic you will return to the DPU to be monitored. If you are given sedative medication you will be monitored initially in the recovery room and then transferred back to the DPU.
- If given sedative medication you will have a needle in your hand or arm. This will be removed when you are taking adequate diet and fluids, and have passed urine.

Recovery and discharge

- After the procedure you may feel the pain has decreased or gone completely. This is due to the local anaesthetic used and will last for a few hours. You may then experience an increase in pain for 5 to 7 days. Pain relief should be apparent within 2 to 4 weeks. This may last for 6 to 12 months.
- You may experience leg weakness and numbness afterwards. Please ensure you ask the nurse for assistance before getting out of bed following the procedure. You will not be discharged from hospital until you can walk unaided.

Discharge instructions

- Rest for the remainder of the day. The following day carry out your normal activities as tolerated. The effects of the injection can then be better assessed.
- If you have a dressing on the injection site keep it clean and dry. It may be removed 24 hours after your procedure.
- If your pain returns, continue with your usual pain medications, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- If you have been given a pain relief chart please complete this and take it with you to your next doctor's appointment.

General post-operative instructions

The medication you were given before the procedure is very effective in reducing discomfort; however, it may also affect your memory for some time afterwards. Even when the sedative appears to have worn off, you may find you are unable to recall details of your discussion with the doctor.

Please contact your doctor or HPH Day Procedure Unit if you have any problems or questions regarding your procedure.

It is important that you do not:

- Drink alcohol
- Drive a car
- Operate hazardous machinery
- Travel alone on public transport
- Make important decisions or sign contracts for 24 hours

Problems requiring prompt medical advice

Please contact your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Elevated temperature and fever like symptoms.
- Severe pain.
- Difficulty in passing urine.
- Redness, swelling, or excessive bleeding from injection site.

SPECIALIST:

DAY PROCEDURE UNIT:

9346 6561 (9am – 5pm)

AFTER HOURS NURSE MANAGER:

9346 6000 (After 5pm)