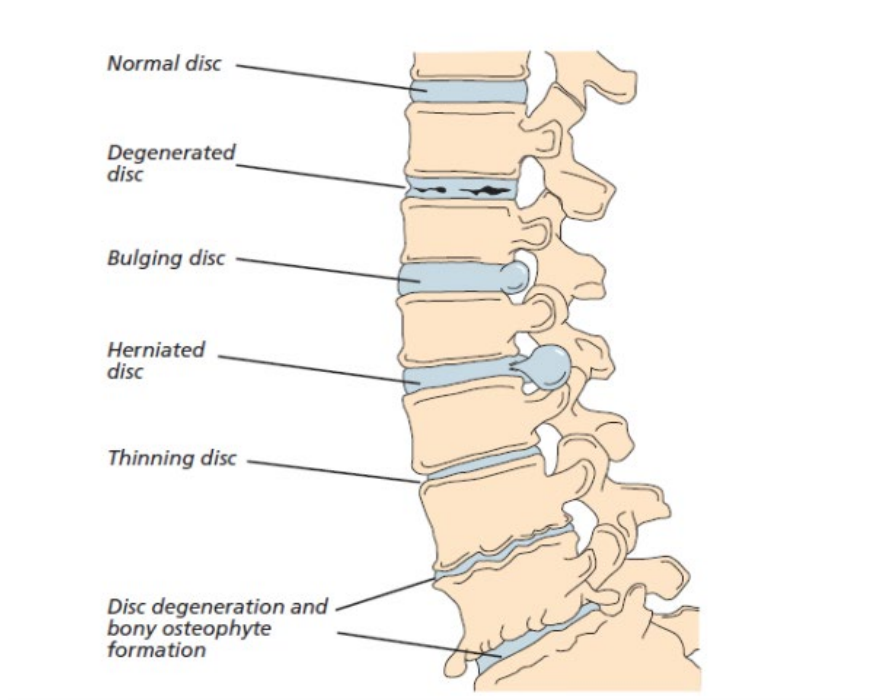


Patient information

Spinal probe injection

What is Spinal Probe?

Spinal probe is an injection into the intervertebral disc (The space between the 2 vertebrae in your back).

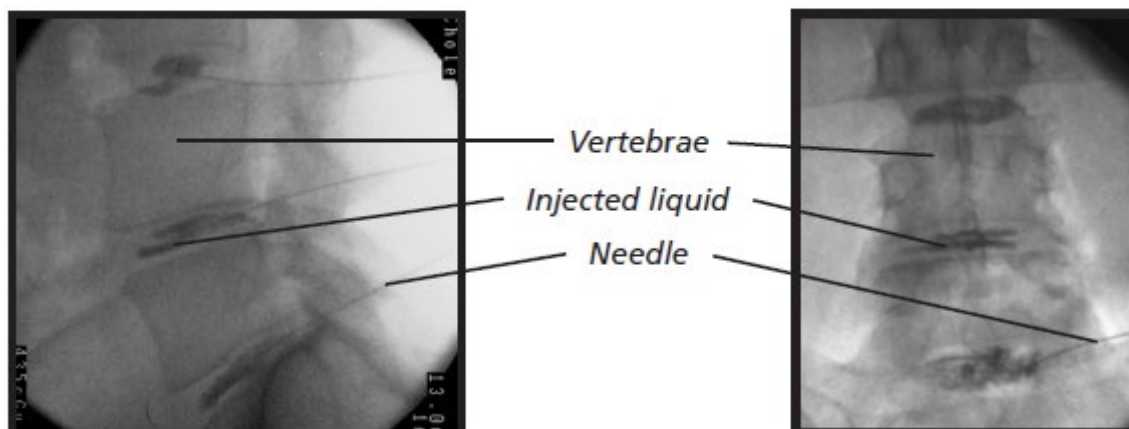


Examples of disc problems

X-ray images of procedure

Side view

Back view



Why would I need this procedure?

Patients with symptoms of back pain may benefit from this investigation which can determine whether or not the intervertebral disc is actually responsible or contributing to the back symptoms. The injection contains a special dye that outlines the disc space and becomes more visible on X-ray. This is followed by injecting a mixture of steroid, local anaesthesia and antibiotics into the disc space. It is thought to have the following beneficial effects:

1. A diagnostic value as the disc can be tested in order to diagnose whether it is the source of pain the patient is experiencing; this is mostly due to the effect of the local anaesthesia. It is important to keep a pain diary after the procedure and report to us at your next visit.
2. The steroid reduces the inflammation which may eventually help to reduce the pain in the early and intermediate stages.

What are the symptoms that have led to me having this procedure?

This injection is usually given when patients present with mechanical back pain, which is mostly localised to the back especially when bending. This may happen as a result of degenerative changes (wear and tear) or tears in the intervertebral disc. The injection does not normally help leg pain or buttock pain. Spinal Probe may also be performed in patients who have persisting localised pain after spinal surgery.

What are the alternatives?

Your consultant or a member of their team will discuss alternative treatments with you appropriate to your condition. You can continue to take painkillers and physiotherapy without having this treatment.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

The side effects are usually rare and self-limiting. This may include:

1. Local bruising and tenderness on your skin.
2. You may feel light headed and unsteady on your feet.
3. It is not uncommon to experience an unusual sensation in the legs for few days after the injection. You may have increased pain in your lower back, this will improve over the period of a few days.
4. Infection, bleeding, nerve damage and damage to surrounding tissues are other rare side effects.
5. The effects of the local steroids on the rest of your body are minimal by this route of administration. The side effects of steroid may occur if many injections are given frequently over a short period of time. The side effects may involve raised blood pressure, weight gain and diabetics may experience short-term problems with blood sugar level control.

The Spinal Probe may be repeated at the discretion of your consultant and with your agreement.

What are the expected benefits of treatment?

This procedure is meant to help us in diagnosing the source of pain which helps in planning future treatment if needed.

The injection also helps to reduce pain, improve mobility, facilitate physiotherapy and thus improve function. By achieving a reduction in pain, we hope that you will take the opportunity to

regularly perform muscle strengthening exercises which is the best way to improve function over the longer term.

In some patients the injection will help reduce the number of painkillers that are required to control the pain and may improve the quality of life.

What should I do before I come into hospital?

You will be seen by the nurse after your consultation in clinic or in preoperative assessment clinic and routine swabs for MRSA will be taken at that stage.

Spinal Probe is performed as a day case procedure. On the day, please take all routine medication. If you are taking any medications to thin blood such as Warfarin, or you have a blood clotting disorder, please inform the preoperative assessment nurses as soon as possible for further advice. Also let us know if you have any infection near the injection site. You will need to be nil by mouth for approximately six hours before the procedure, however, you are allowed to have clear fluids including water, black tea and coffee up to 6:30 am on the day of the procedure. Further instructions will be given to you by the nurses at the preoperative assessment clinic.

Where will the procedure take place?

Shortly before the Spinal probe, you will see a member of the team who will confirm the procedure with you, check your clinical records and ask you to sign or confirm a consent form for the procedure if this has not been done in the clinic. You will be accompanied to the anaesthetic room where other checks will be confirmed.

The procedure takes about 20 minutes. You will be lying on your front on a table with your head and arms resting on a pillow. The lower back will be exposed, and the site of injection will be cleaned with antiseptics. A local anaesthetic injection which is guided by X-rays will be given to help numb the area and this will be followed by injecting the dye into the disc space which is also guided by X-rays.

After confirming the correct level and location of the disc, the steroid, local anaesthesia and antibiotics injection will be followed. There may be some discomfort in the back at the time of the injection. While the injection is in progress, it can be normal to feel some pressure in the lower back, heaviness and even some numbness.

Will I have an anaesthetic?

The procedure is usually performed under intravenous sedation which will send you gradually to sleep. During the injection, most patients are very drowsy that they may not even remember the procedure. General anaesthesia may also be considered in exceptional circumstances.

How will I feel afterwards?

After the procedure you will be taken on your bed to the recovery ward where nurses will monitor your blood pressure and pulse. Oxygen may be given to you through a facemask to help you wake up after the sedation. If you have difficulty moving, a member of staff will be there to help you. You may sleep in any position that you find comfortable. However, do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcohol for 24 hours following your procedure. It is important that you have a responsible adult to escort you home. It is recommended that you rest for the remainder of the day.

How long will I be in hospital?

The procedure is a day case, so you can go home as soon as you feel comfortable.

What should I do when I go home?

If the Spinal Probe helps to reduce the level of your pain, please remember that it is not a cure, and you may still have a problem with your back. Do not rush about doing strenuous activities but build up your activity levels slowly.

How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?

You should be able to return to normal activities the following day. There are no other restrictions following the injection. It is important to keep active and there is advice on how to do this at: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/conditions/back-pain/>

Will I have to come back to hospital?

You will see us in the clinic in 6-8 weeks following your injection. An appointment will be made for you when you leave the hospital.

When can I return to work?

You should be able to return to work the following day after your procedure.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

Consultant spine surgeons at the Trust, Consultant anaesthetist, Pre-operative assessment team and physiotherapist.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this leaflet you can contact:

The Orthopaedic Research Unit on 0300 131 4500 Ext. 6493 / 8104 or your consultant's secretary via the hospital switchboard

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Mr Guy Selmon, Consultant spine surgeon (Clinical Lead)

Mr Satish Ganesan, Consultant spine surgeon

Dr Peter Vondras, Consultant Anaesthetist

Kate Weatherly, Research physiotherapist

Angela Barnes, Orthopaedic outpatient department sister, Conquest Hospital.

The directorate group that has agreed this patient information leaflet:

Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery

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Responsible clinician/author: Mr Guy Selmon, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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