

## DIGITAL NERVE BLOCK CELLULITIS

### PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

#### What is a digital nerve block?

A digital nerve block is an injection of local anaesthetic that makes the finger (or toe) goes numb.

#### Why is it done?

It is done to reduce the pain you feel when having treatment for an injury, such as putting a dislocated or broken finger back into place, cleaning or bringing together the edges of a wound, or removing the nail if it is damaged or infected.

#### How is it done?

A small needle is used to inject local anaesthetic (lignocaine) at the base of the finger or toe to numb it. It takes three injections to block all the nerves and to make the finger or toe totally numb.



#### What does it feel like?

When the anaesthetic first goes in it tingles and is slightly uncomfortable. It will take about a minute for the tingling to go away. The finger or toe will go numb over the next five minutes and the pain eases.

The numbness will last for about an hour. During this time your finger will not feel heat or cold. Until the feeling in your finger returns to normal you should avoid using your hand. Simple painkillers such as paracetamol can be taken if there is any discomfort as the local anaesthetic wears off.

#### Are there any side effects?

This type of anaesthetic is used every day in the Emergency Department and side effects are very uncommon. You should tell the doctor/nurse if you are allergic to anything.

#### What if I can still feel pain after the injection?

Once your finger or toe is numb you may be able to feel pressure but you should not feel any pain. If you do feel pain, let the doctor or nurse know straight away. Sometimes it takes longer than 5 minutes for the anaesthetic to work. Sometimes, the doctor or nurse may have to give more anaesthetic, but because the finger or toe is already partly numb the tingling and discomfort is usually much less than with the first injection.

#### What if I am frightened by the thought of the injection?

Many people feel nervous about having an injection but for some people the thought of having an injection is very frightening. Please talk to the staff about any worries you have. They will listen and may be able to suggest things to help you during the procedure.

## Useful websites

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.chsft.nhs.uk](http://www.chsft.nhs.uk)

## Contact details

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

Information is based on that available on [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk).

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