

Percutaneous sclerotherapy: aftercare

You have had percutaneous sclerotherapy. This is a procedure to treat a “malformation”, a collection of abnormally developed blood vessels or lymphatic channels by inserting small needles through the skin and injection of a drug (sclerosant).

This was performed by Dr _____

Date and time: _____

What to expect afterwards

- Rest, take it easy and avoid strenuous activity for the next 24-48 hours.
- You may have pain, bruising and discomfort near/around the treatment site. This should improve over the next 72 hours. Please take painkillers for relief either at home or ask the nursing staff if in hospital. It will take several weeks to settle down completely.
- Slight oozing from your wound site is normal, if you see fresh blood or bleeding put pressure on it immediately. If it does not stop after 10 minutes of pressure then call for help - please attend the Emergency Department or call 999.
- A compression dressing over the treatment site should stay on for 24 hours. If it feels too tight you can loosen or remove it completely. The day after the procedure you can remove the dressing and the plasters underneath. If the wound is still oozing use another plaster.
- Once the dressing is removed please wear the compression dressing (if supplied) during the day but not at night.
- Try and elevate the area treated when resting to help reduce swelling. A cold compress can also be used.
- Depending on whether the arm or leg was treated you may be have been provided with a sling or crutches. Please use these for 48 hours after the procedure.
- Some other problems that may occur:

Problem	How to deal with it?
Skin changes or damage	The drug that we inject can stain or darken the skin. This can take several weeks to lighten and disappear. A permanent staining is rare. Very rarely skin can breakdown (ulcerate) and require skin grafting. If your skin becomes red, hot or blisters you will need to seek medical attention. Please contact the Radiology department.

Blood clots	This could occur in the treated limb or in the lungs. Veins just under the skin may become hard and painful. This will settle down and is not serious. If the whole leg or arm swells or you develop chest pain and shortness of breath shortly after the procedure please come to the hospital immediately.
Damage to surrounding structures	Leakage of the drug in to surrounding tissues can bruise nerves and muscle. This can cause weakness, numbness, pain and stiffness in the limb. This will take several weeks to settle.

When to seek help

Please contact us if you experience:

- Increasing swelling or pain that is not controlled with painkillers
- Light headedness, dizziness, nausea, clammy skin, blurry vision or loss of consciousness.
- If you are worried or concerned in any way about your treatment.

Please bring this information sheet with you if you seek medical attention.

Pain relief

If you have the following painkillers at home, take as follows if it is safe for you to do so:

- Paracetamol – do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours (unless you have been advised otherwise e.g. you have a reduced liver function).
- Anti-inflammatory – Ibuprofen, Aspirin, etc. You can take one of these in addition to paracetamol if you have moderate pain (unless you have been advised otherwise e.g. you have a duodenal ulcer).

As healing occurs, you will feel less pain. Once your pain is controlled and is mild, you should only take paracetamol. If your pain remains severe for more than three days or is not relieved by your painkillers, you should contact your GP.

When can I resume my normal lifestyle?

This will depend on how soon you recover. You should be able to resume most normal activities of daily living within 48 to 72 hours. You should expect to be off work for 1 to 2 weeks.

When can I drive?

You should consider whether your wound or pain may prevent you from driving e.g. being able to perform an emergency stop comfortably. This will take up to a week but longer in some cases. If you were given sedation then you should not drive for the next 24 hours (see separate information sheet).

What happens next?

You will receive an appointment date approximately 6 weeks after treatment to assess your response and whether a further treatment is required. This is often the case.

Contact us

Radiology Day Case Unit on 0118 322 8368 (Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm).

Out of hours please attend Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Emergency Department or your nearest Emergency Department.

Further information

For further information about the Trust, visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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