The Anaesthesia department comprises doctors and nurses, whose primary role is to ensure a safe and pain-free journey for patients undergoing surgery. An anaesthesia specialist keeps a close watch over every patient in the Operating Theatre, offering patient care from pre to post-surgery. Our anaesthetists also support the Intensive Care Unit and Pain Service.
Anaesthesia

Fascia Iliaca Catheter
For Pain Relief From Hip Fracture

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What is Fascia-Iliaca Catheter and how does it work?

A Fascia-Iliaca Catheter (FIC) consists of a thin, long and hollow plastic tube (catheter), which is inserted under ultrasound guidance into the fascia iliaca space containing the nerves that convey pain from a fractured hip. An infusion of local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) helps to block this pain.

What can I expect on the day of the procedure?

An Anaesthetist will visit you in the ward to evaluate if the procedure is suitable for you. You will be transferred to the operating theatre for the procedure. The skin of your upper thigh will be cleaned and an injection administered to numb your skin before the procedure. An ultrasound will be performed to identify the space containing the nerves to insert the FIC. A local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) will be infused continuously through this catheter.

How long will pain relief last?

The numbing agent is administered continuously via an infusion pump or balloon to aid with pain relief. The catheter can be removed 2-3 days later or sometimes up to 2 weeks after the procedure. Please check with your doctor.

How much pain relief will it provide?

The goal of the FIC is to provide maximum pain relief to you. Should pain still be felt, additional painkillers can be given to you in the form of tablets or injections. On rare occasions, if the pain persists due to the catheter, we may choose to re-insert the catheter. The goal of the Acute Pain Service team is to keep you safe and comfortable during the procedure.

What are the benefits of the Fascia-Iliaca Catheter?

- Improve pain control, with or without the procedure.
- Reduce the need for strong painkillers (oral or injections).
- Fewer side-effects reported such as delirium, nausea and constipation.
- Better compliance with physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

Are there side effects?

FIC is a safe and recommended procedure used around the world to provide pain relief of hip fractures. Like other procedures some side-effects may be reported, such as:

- Bleeding
- Bruising
- Infection
- Nerve Injury - Rare; with an incidence of 1:4000 - 200,000 blocks. The use of ultrasound and placement by experienced personnel lower the incidence of this serious complication. Most nerve injuries are temporary and self-limiting.
- Failure - The pain relief achieved via FIC may sometimes need to be supplemented by stronger painkillers. Rarely, we will advise a re-insertion of the catheter.

Your Anaesthetist and the Acute Pain Service team will monitor you to make sure:

- Side-effects and complications are detected and managed early.
- The systems administering the drugs are functioning properly.
- Additional painkillers are prescribed, as needed.
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