## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Information Sheet for Patients having a Greater Occipital Nerve Injection

### What is a Greater Occipital Nerve Injection?
A greater occipital nerve injection is an injection of local anaesthetic and often a steroid, around the occipital nerve. The occipital nerves run either side of the head, from the back of the neck, up and over the top of the head.

### Why am I being offered the injection?
The nerves that travel from your spine (in the neck) to the back of the head and scalp are known as the occipital nerves. The greater occipital nerve communicates with the trigeminal nerve which is the pain nerve of the head and face. The nerve block reduces impulses in this nerve therefore reducing the symptoms of migraine and other headaches.

### What should I expect?
A small needle will be used to perform the injection into both sides of your head at the back of the skull. The back of your skull and top of your head may be numb for several hours from the local anaesthetic that is injected around the nerve.

### What side effects might I get?
It is common to experience a lump at the injection site with an accompanying "bruised" sensation for a few or several days. About one in 30 patients experience worsening of their head pain, which is usually short term. Infection of the injection site rarely could occur. Very rarely, patients can faint with injections: if you are prone to fainting then you should be lying down to have the injection. Some people can experience temporary hair-loss at the site of injection.

### Who cannot have a nerve block?
You cannot have this nerve block if you are allergic to any of the medications being injected or if you have an active infection near the injection site.

**Please ensure that you have someone to drive you home after this injection.**

You will be reviewed in the Headache Clinic to assess your response. We can then decide on further steps to help your headache if needed.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

Working with you, for you