

Patient information for shockwave

Patient Information

Shockwave Therapy is a series of energetic shockwaves applied to the area that needs treatment. A shockwave is a purely mechanical wave, not an electric one. The treatment initiates an inflammation-like condition (pro-inflammatory) in the tissue that is being treated. The body responds by increasing the blood circulation and metabolism in the impact area which in turn accelerates the body's own healing processes. The shockwaves break down injured tissue and calcifications. Shockwave offers two main advantages over traditional surgical methods: fewer potential complications and a faster return to normal activity

- No anaesthesia
- Non- invasive
- No medication
- No surgery
- Fast treatment – 15 minutes per session, 3-4 sessions required
- Fewer complications
- Virtually painless after treatment
- Significant clinical benefit often seen 6-8 weeks after treatment

How does Shockwave work?

- The shockwave is delivered to the tissue via a compressed air impulse exerted by the hand piece.
- The shockwave radiates out, extending to the entire area where pain occurs.
- Usually no more than 3-4 sessions are needed.
- Each treatment takes approximately 5-10 minutes to be delivered.
- No anaesthetic is required and you can continue usual activities. (It is recommended to avoid pain provoking exercise for 24 hours following treatment.)
- No surgery or other therapy, except an appropriate loading programme, is required and treatment can usually start straight away.

Are there any contraindications or precautions that I should be aware of?

Yes.

- Cortisone injections are not to be administered within the last 11 weeks prior to shockwave therapy treatment.
- Sometimes there may be some bruising and hemorrhaging tendencies and coagulation system disturbances. As such if you are on warfarin or other anti-coagulant therapies please notify your clinician.
- If you have a cardiac pacemaker please notify your clinician prior to treatment as shockwave therapy may interfere with this.
- Acute inflammation in the treatment area.
- If you have been diagnosed with cancer you should notify your clinician, as the treatment would not be appropriate in this case.
- If you are pregnant please notify your clinician, as treatment should not be administered

What is the success rate for Shockwave Therapy?

Documented international results show an overall result rate of 77% of chronic conditions that have not been cured with other kinds of treatment. It is important to highlight that we would expect positive clinical outcomes following treatment however there is a chance that the treatment may not improve your symptoms. A review at 12 weeks is recommended following your final treatment. If at this stage your symptoms persist you will be advised of alternative treatments/surgery by your medical practitioner.

What are the advantages with Shockwave Therapy?

Shockwave Therapy is applied without medication, for example Cortisone injections. The treatment stimulates and effectively supports the body's self healing mechanisms. It is usual to experience immediate pain relief following the treatment and hence improved movement. Reported side effects are minimal, however there may be some discomfort during treatment, skin reddening, possible bruising. If you are concerned please speak with your medical practitioner before receiving treatment.

Commonly Asked Questions

Is the shockwave treatment itself painful?

Sometimes the treatment is a bit painful, but most people can stand these few intense minutes without medication. If you are in pain during the treatment please notify your medical practitioner as there are some adjustments that can be made to reduce the discomfort, however, having some pain during the treatment illustrates that shockwaves are having a positive effect.

Can I exercise straight after treatment?

Even if you have no pain we strongly recommend that you refrain from intensive activities that stress the treated area for the next 24 hours after each treatment. Ensure that your physiotherapist gives you the appropriate exercise programme to follow.

What if the shockwave treatment doesn't work for me?

Even though the response to shockwave treatment normally is exceptionally good within a few weeks it may take several months before maximum effect is achieved. If after 3-4 months you still do not experience a pronounced improvement, surgery for example may be an alternative depending on your particular clinical picture.

Will I be in pain after the treatment?

You will normally experience a reduced level of pain or no pain at all immediately after the treatment, but a mild and diffused pain may occur a few hours later. This dull pain can last for a day or so.

What shall I do if I am in pain after the treatment?

Shockwave Treatment initiates a pro-inflammatory condition in the tissue that is being treated. If necessary you may use ordinary prescription-free pain killers. Do not use anti-inflammatory medication and do not use ice on the treated area as both will interfere with the body's self healing abilities.