

JOINT AND SOFT TISSUE STERIOD INJECTION

WHAT IS IT?

Local steroid injections are low doses of steroids injected into joints or soft tissues. They usually work by reducing tissue inflammation and this can be an effective way of reducing pain. They are usually mixed with a local anaesthetic and the two are injected together.

WHAT PREPARATION IS NECESSARY?

No preparation is required. Please let us know you are taking anticoagulants (such as Warfarin or Heparin) or if you have a tendency to bleed easily.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The radiologist will inject the steroid into the joint or soft tissue using imaging (usually ultrasound) to make sure the needle is in exactly the right position. With deep injections local anaesthetic is sometimes put into the skin and soft tissues before the actual steroid injection and this will sting.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The whole procedure usually lasts between 10 and 15 minutes. If more than one injection is being given, it may take longer.

WHAT WILL I FEEL AFTER THE INJECTION?

After the injection, the area injected may feel numb if local anaesthetic has been used and this numbness will last for between 1/2 hour and 6 hours. In some people, symptoms may become worse over the first 24 hours following the injection. If the pain gets worse, you may need to take some of your normal painkiller. If the pain becomes very severe or you feel unwell, please contact the X-ray department or the doctor who has sent you for the injection.

AFTERCARE

We ask you to rest the area injected for at least 2 days.

Most people find that the steroids begin to reduce pain after a few days but in some cases it may take longer. Some people require more than one injection of steroid to help the pain settle, however, the need for further injections and the timing of further injections will be decided by your own doctor.

If you have any questions please talk to your own doctor or the radiologist at the time of the injection.

UNWANTED EFFECTS

If the injection site is near the skin surface, occasionally the steroid can cause some minor skin discolouration. There is a very low level risk of introducing infection whenever an injection is given.

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