

Corticosteroid Injection Information

In the case of an emergency such as suspected infection or allergic reaction please go to Accident and Emergency to seek immediate medical attention.

What is in the injection?

Corticosteroid is a strong anti-inflammatory medication. It can reduce pain and swelling, allowing you to start rehabilitation sooner.

Local anaesthetic helps us to diagnose the problem and can ease the pain.

How can an injection help me?

Because the medication is placed directly into the affected tissue, the effect on your symptoms is stronger and faster than with tablets. You should feel some improvement within 3 or 4 days.

How many injections will I need?

The number of injections required will vary for different problems and you may need more than one. Please tell us if you have had an injection before.

What happens before the injection?

- The injection will be explained and you will have the chance to ask questions.
- You can delay your decision or decide not to have the injection.
- The clinician will complete a pre injection screening form with you to reduce the risk of side effects or potential complications.
- You will be asked to sign a form to say you agree to have the injection.

Do I continue with my painkillers?

It is safe to take painkillers at the same time as receiving an injection and they will help with the discomfort some people feel after the injection. Please keep taking your painkillers, if you need to.

What happens after the injection?

You may be asked to wait with us for a period of time after your injection to make sure you feel well before leaving the department.

What should I do or expect afterwards?

- The anti-inflammatory effect starts 24-36 hours after the injection and will continue for up to 6 weeks.
- Do not overdo it but please move and use the area normally.
- Avoid the things which used to give you pain for about a week after the injection.

You shouldn't have a steroid injection if;

- You are allergic to corticosteroids.
- You don't feel well e.g. with a cold, virus or sore throat.
- You have an infection anywhere in your body.
- You are under 18 yrs old.
- You have a bleeding disorder.
- You are due to have surgery soon.

It's very important that you tell us if you have had an injection recently and if you have any of the following conditions;

- Diabetes
- A lung or heart condition
- Epilepsy
- A malignant tumour
- If you are taking medication to thin your blood
- Renal or Liver Disorder
- Recent trauma and possible fracture.
- If you are pregnant
- Recent vaccinations or injections e.g. flu, travel.

Serious complications are rare

Infection:

As with any invasive procedure there is a small risk of infection. Symptoms can include: redness, heat, swelling, increasingly severe pain in the area where you had the injection, 'flu-like' symptoms and feeling generally unwell. If you suspect that there may be an infection please go to Accident and Emergency for medical attention.

Allergic reaction / Anaphylaxis

Although rare, some people can have an allergic reaction. If you develop a rash, swelling around your mouth or throat, or breathing difficulties please call 999 and go to Accident and Emergency for immediate medical attention.

Are there any side effects from this treatment?

Side effects are very rare but the following reactions are possible. Most are mild and will settle quickly. Please let us know if you noticed any of these reactions after having your injection.

- Your symptoms may feel a bit worse for up to 2 days with some warmth and swelling in the area around the injection site. This should settle with an ice pack & painkillers.
- Bleeding or bruising may occur at the site of injection.
- Depigmentation. Occasionally your skin may become slightly thinner and lighter around the site of the injection. This is usually an area around the size of a 10 pence piece. The effect may be permanent and is more common in people with a darker skin.
- Fat Atrophy. Occasionally there may be some loss of subcutaneous fat at the site of the injection. The effect can be permanent.
- Muscle Atrophy. Occasionally there may be loss of muscle tissue at the site of injection. This is more common with frequent injections. The effect can be permanent.
- Tissue Weakening. Soft tissues around the injection site may be weaker for about 4-6 weeks following the injection. There is a greater risk of injury or rupture of the tendon during this time. This is more common with frequent injections. Please avoid heavy or repeated strain of the area that has been injected for 4-6 weeks
- Your face may appear slightly flushed for a few days.
- Your period may become irregular but should settle quickly. Post menopausal woman can occasionally experience bleeding which again should settle quickly.
- If you are diabetic your sugar levels may go up for a short while. Please monitor your sugar levels carefully for up to 2 weeks after your injection.
- You may experience a change in mood. This may be more common in people with a previous history of mood disturbance. If you are worried, please contact your doctor.