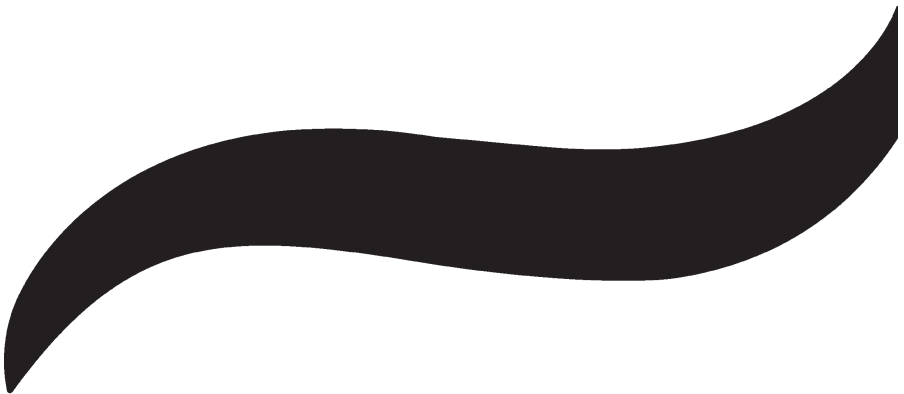




# Corticosteroid Injections

Your questions answered

Information for patients  
Physiotherapy



## **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 felt any of these things after having your injection.

- ❖ Your symptoms may feel a bit worse for up to 2 days with some warmth and swelling. This should settle with an ice pack & painkillers.
- ❖ Your face may appear slightly flushed for up to 2 days.
- ❖ For women your period may become irregular but should settle quickly. If disturbance continues for more than one cycle discuss with your GP.
- ❖ Your skin may become slightly thinner and discoloured around the site of the injection.
- ❖ If you are diabetic your sugar levels may go up for a short while. Please monitor your diabetes extra carefully for 2 weeks after your injection. If they continue to be high contact your diabetes specialist for advice.

## **SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS**

If the area that was injected becomes hot, swollen and more painful than before and does not settle please contact your GP or go to Accident and Emergency for medical attention.

## **ALLERGIC REACTION**

Although rare, some people have an allergic reaction.

If you develop a rash, swelling around your mouth, or throat, or breathing difficulties go to Accident and Emergency for medical attention immediately.

## **WHAT IS IN THE INJECTION?**

It is made up of 1 or 2 types of drug.

- ❖ 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 injected in or around the affected joint/tissue, the effect on your symptoms should be 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. We do not want to give you too many injections so please tell us if you have had an injection before.

## **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 3-6 weeks.
- ❖ Do not overdo it for the first 48 hours but please move and use the area normally.
- ❖ It is advisable to avoid heavy lifting or pushing for around 1 week following injection.
- ❖ If the injection is for your hip, knee or ankle you may be asked to rest for 24 hrs

### **You shouldn't have a steroid injection if:**

- ❖ You are allergic to corticosteroids or local anaesthetic.
- ❖ You don't feel well e.g. 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.
- ❖ You have a fear of needles or feel uncomfortable with the thought of injection.

## How many injections will I need?

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
- ❖ Are taking medication to thin your blood (Bring in your INR booklet if you have one.
- ❖ Recent trauma and possible fracture.
- ❖ If you are pregnant
- ❖ If you are receiving any other injections e.g. flu or covid vaccine

## **CURRENT GUIDANCE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

If you have the following symptoms or one of the following applies to your current situation, inform your clinician and DO NOT attend the hospital for injection.

1. Persistent dry cough
2. High temperature/fatigue
3. Loss of taste or smell
4. Over 70 years old
5. You have been advised to 'shield'
6. You are pregnant
7. You have been in contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 infection (follow government advice)

Further advice regarding isolation and shielding is available from the website below:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>

## **IS INJECTION SAFE DURING THIS PANDEMIC?**

If your pain is having a significant impact on your quality of life injection may be considered.

Injection can be undertaken if other approaches such as physiotherapy, pain medication and modification of activity has proven unsuccessful.

## **ARE THERE ANY RISKS RELATED TO COVID-19?**

The effects of steroid injections on COVID-19 infection are poorly understood.

Previous evidence has demonstrated that steroid injection into a joint can reduce the local effect of the immune system.

The effects of steroid on the immune system as a whole is not as well researched.

It has been shown in studies related to the more common flu strains that steroid injection has a 1 in 1000 chance of increasing the likelihood of infection.

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**

- ❖ It is wise to try other treatment approaches before considering injection.
- ❖ If you are at greater risk of COVID-19 and suffer from other medical conditions injection is best avoided.
- ❖ There may be a very small increased risk of infection but this is not well established or understood. You must consider injection may increase your risk of infection however this risk is relatively small.
- ❖ You should discuss this in detail with your clinician and follow government guidance on limiting the spread of COVID-19.

## ADVICE ON COVID VACCINATIONS

Currently there is no evidence to suggest that a steroid injection to a joint or soft tissue will reduce the effectiveness of a COVID vaccine. However as there is concern that a steroid injection may reduce the local effects of the immune system it has been advised that non-essential steroid injections should be delayed for 2 weeks after the vaccination. This can be arranged in discussion with the clinician planning the injection.

If you develop any of the serious complications detailed in this booklet contact NHS 24 or Accident and Emergency to seek immediate medical attention.

Inform your physiotherapist or doctor as soon as possible.

### **Physiotherapy Department**

❖ Musculoskeletal Hub: 01236 713901

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