



PAINLESS

PATIENT FACTSHEET

TITLE

Hyaluronic Acid (HA) Injections for Joint Pain

SUMMARY

Joint injections are the most common procedure used for joint pain. Hyaluronic acid (HA) injections are particularly effective for osteoarthritis and other degenerative joint conditions. This factsheet explains how and why you may consider a HA injection procedure, as well as the potential risks and recovery requirements.

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JOINT PAIN OVERVIEW

A healthy joint has cartilage and lubricating joint fluid — called synovial fluid — to protect and cushion the bones, allowing them to move without friction. In arthritic conditions such as osteoarthritis or inflammatory arthritis, the cartilage protecting the joint becomes compromised and the joint fluid loses its shock-absorbing qualities. This increases friction within your joints, leading to pain, stiffness and poor mobility.

The cause of arthritis is often multifactorial; therefore, your treatment must be multifactorial too. A minimally invasive procedure may be used as part of a

multidisciplinary treatment plan to provide medium, to long term, pain relief.

It's important to note that joint pain procedures will not cure joint pain. Rather, they provide an extended period of pain relief during which you can progress with physiotherapy and implement the lifestyle changes necessary to achieve long term improvements.

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TYPES OF ARTHRITIS

OSTEOARTHRITIS (OA)

Osteoarthritis (OA) – sometimes referred to as degenerative joint disease – is the most common form of arthritis. It involves the gradual degradation of the connective tissues that support your joints. Symptoms include joint pain and stiffness (generally aggravated by too much or too little movement). OA generally develops slowly over time and is most common in the later stages of life.

A common misconception about OA is that it will inevitably worsen over time. This is not necessarily the case. With medical and lifestyle interventions, OA progression can be stopped and, in some cases, reversed.

INFLAMMATORY ARTHRITIS

Inflammatory arthritis is a term used to describe a group of arthritic conditions that are usually autoimmune in nature. This means the immune system attacks your connective tissues, leading to inflammation within your joints. The most common forms include rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, lupus and ankylosing spondylitis.

Treating inflammatory arthritis requires addressing the immune system dysregulation whilst also supporting joint health. Inflammatory arthritis is not currently considered 'curable', however complete remission can be achieved through medical and lifestyle interventions.

HYALURONIC ACID (HA) INJECTIONS

Joint injections are the most common procedure used for joint pain. They allow medications to be inserted directly into the affected joint(s) to produce a targeted effect. Different medicines will be injected depending on your condition, symptoms and requirements.

for people with damaged joint fluid, commonly associated with osteoarthritis. Various forms of hyaluronic acid are used in injections. Some are derived from animals whilst some are produced synthetically.

HYALURONIC ACID (HA) INJECTIONS

Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a substance naturally produced within your joints. It is designed to reduce friction, provide lubrication and aid in shock absorption. Several manmade HA substances can be injected in the knee, hip or shoulder joint. This approach is particularly helpful

TYPES OF HA INJECTIONS

| TYPE | NAME | EFFICACY TIME |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Animal derived | - | Highly variable |
| Semi-synthetic | Synvisc® | 6 months |
| Fully-synthetic | Durolane® | 12 months |

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Joint injections of HA replace the damaged joint fluid and provide extra cushioning for your joint. However, they do not reduce inflammation the way steroid injections do. If you have an inflammatory condition such as Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) or inflammatory arthritis, before you consider an HA injection, we recommend that you use steroids to reduce the inflammation.

STEP BY STEP

Medical imaging – most commonly a CT – is used to place the needle into the joint cavity. The injection is then administered directly into the joint. The injection is repeated in each of the affected joints. A single injection takes between 10 and 15 minutes.

EFFECTS

Everyone responds differently to hyaluronic acid injections. Some people get immediate relief, whilst

others may not feel the effects until up to a month after the procedure. The effects of the procedure will also depend upon which form of HA is used. **A synthetic HA (Durolane) is most commonly used at Painless, as it provides the longest lasting effects.**

RECOVERY

After the injection, avoid strenuous activities for about 48 hours. However, you can resume your usual day-to-day activities immediately.

SIDE EFFECTS

The most common side effect is minor pain at the injection site or a minor build-up of fluid in the joint. These are both normal effects of the procedure and will get better within a few days. Rarely, the joint may become slightly inflamed for a few days following the procedure.