



PAINLESS

PATIENT FACTSHEET

TITLE

Steroid Injections for Joint Pain

SUMMARY

Joint injections are the most common procedure used for joint pain, with steroid injections being particularly common for inflammatory arthritis conditions. This factsheet explains how and why you may consider a steroid 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 these 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 – 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.

STEROID JOINT 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.

STEROID INJECTIONS

Corticosteroid, sometimes called cortisone, is an anti-inflammatory medication used to treat pain and inflammation. It works by suppressing the activity of the immune system, making it particularly effective for inflammatory arthritis conditions. Injections allow corticosteroid to be delivered directly to sites of

INFLAMMATORY ARTHRITIS

Inflammatory arthritis is a term used to describe a group of arthritic conditions that are usually autoimmune in nature. 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 while also supporting joint health. Inflammatory arthritis is not currently considered 'curable'. However, complete remission is achievable through medical and lifestyle interventions.

inflammation without the side effects associated with oral corticosteroids.

Additionally, the injection will likely also contain a local anaesthetic, which will numb the joint for several hours after the procedure. Depending upon your individual condition and which joints are involved, you may receive either a single injection or multiple injections.

STEP BY STEP

Medical imaging – usually an ultrasound or CT – is used to place the needle into the joint cavity. The corticosteroid, combined with a local anaesthetic, is

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then administered into the joint. The needle is removed, and the procedure is complete.

EFFECTS

We use a **long-acting steroid called Triamcinolone** in joint injections. The steroid takes effect after 24 hours. The beneficial effects slowly increase over the next four weeks. The use of a steroid within the joint can provide pain relief for six weeks to six months, depending on your condition. After the injection, it is best to avoid strenuous activities for 48 hours. However, you can resume your normal day-to-day activities immediately.

SIDE EFFECTS

Steroids have immunosuppressant effects, which may increase susceptibility to infection. For this reason, we will not perform this procedure if you have any form of infection.

As a general rule, no more than three treatments should be performed in a 12-month period. More frequent treatments may increase the risk of weakened tissue and may possibly accelerate arthritis.

Rarely, side effects associated with corticosteroid use include hypertension, oedema, hyperglycaemia and altered mental state. Anaphylactic or hypersensitivity reactions are rare but possible with steroid injections.