

STEROID INJECTIONS

Following your appointment it has been decided that a steroid injection could help your condition. This information sheet is intended to answer any questions you may have.

Why do I need a steroid injection?

A steroid injection can be given to help reduce pain and swelling in a joint or the surrounding soft tissue.

Will it be painful?

There may be some pain but this usually wears off within a couple of hours. Often local anaesthetic will be injected at the same time as the steroid which may ease the pain at the time of injection, but the pain may return when the anaesthetic wears off. Very occasionally patients may experience a flare up of their pain within the first 24 to 48 hours after the injection. This is nothing to worry about and normally goes away within a couple of days.

How quickly will it work?

Most patients report feeling less pain within the first 24 hours to one week.

You may find your pain improves for a few weeks to several months and in some cases the injection can allow your pain to resolve completely.

Are there any side effects?

Occasionally, but fortunately they are very rare. They can include:

- Some thinning of the skin at the injection site.
- Some loss of skin colour at the injection site.
- An alteration in sugar levels in people with diabetes. Before the injection this will have been discussed with your medical practitioner and you will be advised to monitor your blood sugar levels.
- Facial flushing (redness of the cheeks). This will pass off without treatment usually within 48 hours.
- Very occasionally an infection can occur. If you experience pain at the injection site that does not improve or the area feels hot and swollen, or you develop a fever, consult your GP immediately or visit the Accident and Emergency Department if a GP is not available.
- Very occasionally a rupture may occur in the tendon. To minimise this small risk it is important to follow the advice to rest.
- You will be monitored for up to half an hour immediately after the injection as very rarely some individuals can have an allergic reaction to the anaesthetic.
- Occasionally women patients may experience some temporary menstrual disturbance. If this persists, seek your GP's advice.

Do I need to do anything after the injection?

Yes. You should rest for 3 - 7 days after the steroid injection, from any activities that currently make your pain worse. The joint should be kept moving, so long as this is not painful, but should not be subjected to heavy work.

The person giving you the injection will give you advice on resuming your normal activities and what you can do to help prevent recurrence of this problem. If you are given some exercise to do, it is important that you follow these instructions to get the most benefit from your treatment. The sticking plaster may be removed the following day.