

TREATING JOINT PAIN WITH STEROID INJECTIONS

Cortisone is a steroid used to treat pain associated with inflammation of the joints. It is designed to be similar to the type of cortisone produced in the body by the adrenal gland when stress occurs. Cortisone is most commonly used in the form of injections to treat joint pain, but it may also be used in creams, lotions and oral tablets.

Can I drive?

You are advised not to drive yourself to your appointment for a steroid injection. The cortisone injection to treat your joint pain may mean that the area of your body where you are injected may be sore and impair your driving, possibly impacting the validity of your insurance. It is a good idea in general to refrain from driving following the procedure to avoid any unnecessary strain on the joints. Please also note that if you have had a nerve conduction test there is a possibility that a steroid injection may be required at a subsequent appointment and the same arrangements regarding driving will need to be made.

Further information about steroid injections

- Cortisone injections are used to relieve the pain caused by the swelling and inflammation of your joints. Cortisone is injected directly into the joint to reduce the swelling and pressure on the nerve tissues, which usually results in pain relief. The doctor or physiotherapist will administer the cortisone injections either on an intermittent basis or as a one off treatment.
- Expect the relief of joint pain from the injection to last for a period of several weeks in most cases. Depending on your joint pain, you may need more frequent injections. Your GP will help you determine how often the injections will be necessary and what other treatment methods may help in relieving your symptoms in the future.
- Be prepared for your doctor or physiotherapist to use a local anesthetic in combination with the cortisone injection to reduce the pain of injection itself. The anesthetic will reduce some of the pain immediately but once it wears off you may need to wait a few days before the cortisone takes effect. The anesthetic also will help the doctor or physiotherapist determine the exact area where you are in pain, which will help him or her find the exact location that will be appropriate for the injection.
- If the injection is delivered by a physiotherapist, they will also provide you with advice and education regarding your condition, alongside an exercise regime and when to introduce this.

After Care Information

- Rest the joint for 1-2 days and to avoid strenuous use for five days but still remain as active as possible
- The joint may be painful for a while post injection and you may need to use pain killers such as paracetamol
- You may suffer some reddening of the skin following the injection this will reduce gradually. Any bleeding (which is very rare), seek advice from your GP
- Following injection, you might experience worsening symptoms during the first 24-48 hours (related to a possible steroid flare) which can be treated with ice and anti-inflammatory medication such as ibrufen. If pain is severe or increasing after 48 hours, seek advice from your GP
- Any other side-effects suggesting infection, seek advice from your GP.

If you have any queries or concerns please contact our Patient Referral Centre on 0333 200 4042 during opening hours Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (excluding Bank Holidays).