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Steroid Injections

Why do I need a steroid injection?

An injection of steroid and local anaesthetic can be given to help reduce pain, swelling and inflammation in a joint or the surrounding tissues.

How does it work?

Steroids have a powerful anti inflammatory action. There are many different types of steroids used.

Will it be painful?

There may be some pain at the time of the injection, but this usually wears off quickly.

How quickly will the injection work?

This varies but most people report improvement in their symptoms within the first 24-48 hours. (It can take up to 2 days for the steroid to take effect).

It is usual to mix the steroid with local anaesthetic so the pain may be better immediately after the injection, but may return when the anaesthetic wears off (usually 1 hour to 4 hours after the injection).

Some people experience a sudden worsening of their pain (a flare) within the first 24-48 hours after the injection. This should improve within a couple of days.

How long will the benefits of the injection last?

If it works, improvement can be maintained for a few weeks to several months or in some cases permanently.

Do I need to do anything after the injection?

You will need to stay in the clinic for 30 minutes after the injection to ensure you have no immediate side effects. Someone will need to drive you home. It is very important to rest for 2-7 days after the injection from activities that make the symptoms worse.

How often can I have an injection?

Usually up to three times a year.

WHAT RISKS ARE THERE?

Injections are often used and are generally very safe. However, in order to make an informed decision and give your consent, you need to be aware of the potential side effects and complications. These can include:

Infection-if you experience any pain at the injection site or in the joint that does not improve, if the area feels hot or you develop a temperature or feel unwell please **contact me immediately**.

Post injection flare of pain-occurs in approximately 2-10% of patients. It is more common after soft tissue injection than after joint injection. The pain will normally subside within a couple of days.

Tendon rupture-this is rare, it is vital that you rest to help avoid this problem.

Thinning of the skin at the injection site- this occurs where there is wasting of fatty tissue under the skin and results in a visible indentation. This occurs in 17-30% of patients

Loss of skin pigmentation (colour) at the injection site-is reported but rare.

An alteration in sugar levels in diabetes- occurs in most diabetic patients and can last for up to 1 week. It is not a significant risk in those with well controlled diabetes. Please inform me if you are diabetic.

Facial flushing-occurs in 5% of patients. It occurs 24-48 hours after the injection and usually last 1-2 days.

Anaphylaxis-is a very rare reaction. This is an allergic reaction to drugs.