

Local Steroid Injections

If you have an inflamed or swollen joint, or if you have pain or inflammation near a joint, your doctor may inject a **steroid** preparation into the affected area. It is known as a **local injection** because it acts only in that area.

Why are local steroid injections prescribed?

A local steroid injection is given to reduce inflammation, swelling and pain within a joint.

How do I have a local steroid injection?

Your GP or nurse specialist will perform the steroid injection. He/she will also decide whether to inject a local anaesthetic at the same time. This does not reduce inflammation but will allow immediate temporary pain relief.

What do I need to do afterwards?

It is often recommended that all joints should be **rested** as much as possible for the first 1 to 2 days after a local steroid injection.

What can I expect afterwards?

It is common for there to be some pain in the joint for up to 3 days after the injection. However most steroid injections may give benefit for up to 2 months or longer. Unfortunately not all steroid injections are effective, so it may be appropriate for you to have another injection or to try alternative treatments.

Are there any risks or side effects?

Side effects are unlikely but occasionally some people notice a flare in their joint pain in the first 24 hours after an injection. This usually settles within 3 days. Extremely rarely an infection might be introduced into the joint at the time of injection. **If the joint becomes more painful and hot you should see your doctor as soon as possible.** Occasionally with some steroid injections some thinning or change in skin colour may occur at the injection site. There may be some other rare side effects including changes in mood, facial flushing and changes in menstrual cycle. If you have any concerns or questions please talk to your doctor.

Can I take other medicines along with steroid injections?

You may take other medicines with local steroid injections. However if you are taking warfarin it is less likely you will be offered an injection because of an increased risk of bleeding into the joint.

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