



Ultrasound Guided Injection





What is an Ultrasound Guided Steroid Injection?

Your doctor has referred you for an ultrasound examination and an ultrasound guided injection. The aim is to either treat or diagnose your condition and, in some instances, to do both at the same time. To do this we usually inject a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid. Steroid injections usually take a week or so to have an effect and can often help ease symptoms for a number of months. Injections of local anaesthetic on its own can sometimes be used to try and identify where pain is coming from, which then helps decide the best treatment.

Is there any preparation?

If you are taking Warfarin or any other blood thinning medicine such as Apixaban, Dabigatran, Rivaroxiban or Clopidogrel please call us as soon as you can, as you may need to stop taking these medications. Your referring doctor will need to decide if it is safe to do so.

You will be advised not to drive for 6 hours after the injection. You should ask someone to accompany you to the appointment, so that they can drive you back after the procedure.

Please inform the person performing your injection if:

- You have a known serious bleeding/blood clotting disorder e.g. haemophilia.
- You are epileptic.
- You are diabetic.
- You have severe liver or kidney disease.
- You are allergic to local anaesthetic or steroids.
- You are pregnant or breast feeding.

What happens during the examination?

The radiologist or sonographer will explain the procedure to you, answer any questions you may have and obtain your permission to perform the injection. Naturally you are free to decline the procedure should you wish not to proceed.

The radiologist or sonographer will clean the skin at the injection site and numb the area with local anaesthetic before injecting the steroid and further local anaesthetic under ultrasound guidance. A small plaster will usually be placed at the site of injection.

You will be asked to wait in the waiting room for up to 30 minutes after the injection, in order that you can relax after the procedure and we can ensure that you are feeling well before you leave.

Are there any side effects?

It is common for patients to feel more discomfort than usual at the site of injection for 24 to 48 hours. Therefore, it is usually recommended that patients rest for 2 days following a steroid injection. If needed, simple painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen may be taken for a day or so whilst the discomfort settles.

We always take appropriate precautions with each procedure to minimize the risk of infection, but inevitably there is a very small residual risk of infection (less than 1 in 3000) that cannot be eliminated. You should contact your doctor if the area injected becomes painful and hot afterwards, particularly if you feel unwell in yourself.

Steroid injections may occasionally turn the skin thin, pale or white at the injection site, or shrink the fat beneath the skin resulting in a dimple. These changes, should they occur, are often prolonged and may be permanent. These side effects are uncommon, and essentially only occur at sites where the injection target is particularly close to the skin surface, such as injections around the hands and feet, elbows and acromioclavicular joints. At other injection sites, such as those around the hip and most shoulder injections, the skin is separated from the injection target by a good covering of fat and muscle and these skin changes do not occur.

Some patients experience facial flushing following a steroid injection, which usually settles over a number of hours. If you are diabetic, you may experience a rise in your blood sugar levels for a few days after the injection. Steroids may rarely cause mood changes and may also cause disturbances to the menstrual cycle.

Although it is important that you are aware of the potential side effects of injectable steroids, it is also important to understand that these very commonly used medications are usually very well tolerated by patients, and can be very helpful in reducing pain and local inflammation, and guiding your doctor on future treatment decisions.

What happens after your ultrasound guided steroid injection?

The clinician who performed your scan and injection will review the images and prepare a report from the findings. Your diagnostic report will be sent to your referring GP or specialist within a few days of your scan.

Further information

Further information is available from the Arthritis Research UK website:

(<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/drugs/local-steroidinjections.aspx>)

Many of your questions may well have been answered by this letter, but your radiologist or sonographer would be happy to answer any further questions you may have about your procedure.



All enquiries:



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Important Information

This is a general patient information leaflet only.

The information you are given may be different to that provided here. This is because the information given to you is tailor made to your individual treatment.

It is very important that you follow the instructions that are given by your clinician.



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