

Joint Injection Patient Information



CRYSTAL PALACE
PHYSIO GROUP

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Making People Better

In some cases your condition may respond to an injection or corticosteroid to help settle your symptoms and help with your recovery. While this is rarely the first line of treatment it can be effective for some people with certain conditions. You will usually have tried other, more conservative, treatment before being offered an injection and it is important that you have exhausted these options first. In some situations you may decide to proceed to an injection straight away and your clinician will guide you through this decision. Unfortunately injections do not always help.

What is a corticosteroid?

A medicine which can relieve swelling, stiffness and pain by reducing inflammation.

Is this the same drug that athletes and bodybuilders take?

No. The steroids we inject are completely different they have been extensively researched and are safe to use when clinically indicated.

Why do I need a steroid injection?

Because it should help to reduce your pain. You can then start rehabilitation sooner, need fewer treatment sessions and return to normal activities more quickly.

Why don't I just take anti-inflammatory pills?

You can, but the side effects of these are much more common and can cause stomach upsets and bleeding. These injections bypass the stomach.

Are there any times I should not have an injection?

Yes, if you:

- Have an infection on your skin or anywhere else in your body
- Are allergic to Lidocaine(Local anaesthetic) or steroid
- Feel unwell
- Are due to have surgery in the area soon
- Are pregnant
- Are under 18
- Do not want the injection

**Your clinician will discuss these factors with you when deciding whether it is safe for you to have the injection.

What are the possible side-effects?

These are unlikely and your clinician will discuss them with you:

- Flushing of the face for a few hours
- Small area of fat loss or a change in colour of the skin around the injection site
- Tendon rupture
- Slight vaginal bleeding
- Diabetic patients may notice a temporary increase in blood sugar levels
- If you are taking blood thinning drugs there may be some temporary bruising
- Infection: if the area becomes hot, swollen and painful for more than 24 hours you should contact the clinician who injected you or your GP.
- You will be asked to wait for 30 minutes after the injection to ensure there is no allergic reaction to the drug

Continued...

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How is the injection done?

The skin is cleaned with antiseptic. A small needle is gently put into the affected part and the solution is injected through the needle. Shortly after, you will be examined again by the clinician performing the injection who has had intensive training in the technique.

Is the injection painful?

There may be some discomfort, sometimes it can be sore for a few hours, and you will be told what to do about this.

How fast does the injection work?

If local anaesthetic is also used the pain should be less within a few minutes, though it may return after about an hour, just as when you visit the dentist. The steroid usually starts to work within 24-48 hours and you may start to notice some improvement, but it can take some weeks to notice an improvement.

How long does the effect last?

This varies from person to person and the condition being treated, but the steroid usually continues working for 3 to 6 weeks and most people will experience a lasting reduction in their symptoms after this period of time.

How many injections can I have?

This depends on the part of the body involved and will be decided by your therapist and yourself. Usually one injection is sufficient, but if the pain is severe or has been there for a long time, you may need more.

What should I do after the injection?

If the problem was caused by overuse, you will probably be told to rest the area for about a week; if it is joint pain, you may start early gentle movement. Your clinician will provide aftercare advice specific to your problem.

Will I have to be seen again?

Some people will need a follow up appointment, others can be reviewed by telephone consultation. Mostly this will happen after a month, occasionally we will ask to see you after 7 - 10 days. Your clinician will discuss with you the most convenient and appropriate way to follow up on your injection, and if this is not clear please ask for clarification. Appropriate advice on further management, and probably some exercises for you to do at home, will be given at the time of the injection and at your follow up appointment.

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