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If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print) please contact Therapy Services or if you want to be more specific (01423) 553026

Contact details:

MSK Physiotherapy Department
Harrogate District Hospital
Lancaster Park Road
Harrogate HG2 7SX

MSK Office: (01423) 553026
Therapy Services: (01423) 553472

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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

ABOUT

RECEIVING CORTICOSTEROID INJECTION THERAPY

Why am I having this injection?

Injections into soft tissues and joints can be very effective in giving pain relief and reducing swelling when the tissue is inflamed. They can also be used to confirm a clinical diagnosis.

What is the injection?

It contains a corticosteroid that has an anti-inflammatory action. This may be mixed with a local anaesthetic which numbs the area temporarily.

How many injections will I need?

The benefit of an injection can vary from person to person and may last several weeks to several months, or be permanent. You may need more than one injection if the symptoms persist. There is, however, a maximum number of times a joint or soft tissue should be injected and this will be discussed as necessary.

Do I continue with my painkillers?

Yes. There is no danger in taking painkillers at the same time as receiving an injection. It may help to settle any temporary pain as a result of the injection.

What should I do following the injection?

You will be asked to wait in the department for 15 minutes to be monitored for any adverse reactions and then to stay in the hospital for a further 15 minutes. To gain the most benefit from the injection, it is important to rest the area for 48 hours, or as advised by the clinician. It often takes several days after an injection before improvement is noticeable. You may be referred for physiotherapy to assist your rehabilitation.

Can I drive after the injection?

It is not usually advisable to drive immediately after the injection. If necessary, ask for advice.

What is an aspiration?

Joint aspiration is the removal of fluid from a joint. A build up of fluid in a joint can cause swelling and discomfort and an aspiration may help to relieve this. Some of the fluid may be sent to the laboratory for testing and this may help with the diagnosis. Sometimes the aspiration is followed by an injection.

Are there any side effects?

The therapist giving the injection will have checked your medical history to ensure that you are at minimal risk of any adverse reaction. In most cases the benefits of the injection outweigh any side effects. However, the following may occur:-

- Post injection “flare” can occur 6-12 hours after the injection and you may feel an increase in pain. This usually resolves within 72 hours, and painkillers and ice can be used to help ease the pain.
- Infection is very rare. If the area becomes hot, swollen and painful after 72 hours, **medical help is necessary immediately.** Contact the MSK office or Therapy Services Department (telephone numbers overleaf.) Ask to speak to your clinician immediately. If unavailable or out of clinic hours, seek immediate attention from your G.P. or Accident and Emergency Department. In the event of COVID-19 infection, there is the potential of prolonged and more severe symptoms.
- Permanent discolouration and thinning of the skin may occur when a superficial structure has been injected (eg tennis elbow).
- Facial flushing may temporarily occur for up to 2 days.
- Menstrual disturbance may occur in some women.
- Diabetics may suffer a raised blood glucose level and therefore blood sugars should be monitored twice daily for 24-48 hours after the injection until stable.
- Anaphylactic shock is extremely rare—this happens immediately and that is why you are asked to remain for 30 minutes post injection.

If you do suffer any side effects following an injection, you must inform the therapist at your next visit.

What if the injection does not work?

It is important that you attend your review appointment so that the therapist can assess the effects of the injection and provide you with advice on further management and treatment options.