

Injection of a Therapeutic Substance into a Joint

Patient Information

Trauma & Orthopaedics



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What is a therapeutic liquid injection?

An injection into a joint is used as a treatment for pain, most often caused by arthritis. Joint injections may be advised if pain killers in tablet form are not controlling pain. The type of injected medication used depends on the type of joint affected and the cause of the pain. Steroid injections are used to reduce inflammation of tissue which in turn reduces the swelling and pain in the joint. The effect of the steroid injection may not occur immediately and can take a number of days or weeks before the pain-relieving benefit is felt.

In some cases, a local anaesthetic may be used, this can have the effect of blocking the nerve supply to the area, causing a numb, painless sensation to occur. The benefit can be felt within 30 minutes of the injection being given. Local anaesthetics usually have a temporary effect. A steroid or local anaesthetic or a combination of both can be used. The doctor or health care practitioner will discuss this with you beforehand.

Benefits of a joint injection

Pain relief can be immediate or occurs within a few days of the injection, depending on the type of injection you had.

Alternative to joint injection

There is no alternative, but to continue with your current treatment.

The joint injection procedure

The joint injection may take place in the operating theatre, ward, outpatient or x-ray departments; this will be at the discretion of the Consultant's team. In some cases, e.g. spinal, foot and ankle or hip injections are performed while an x-ray is taken of the area to be injected.

After the injection has been given a small dressing will be placed over the site.

Depending on the joint injected, you may be unable to drive after the procedure so it may be necessary for you to make arrangements for your own transport home.

It is advisable to rest the joint for 24 hours after the injection and to avoid strenuous exercise involving the joint.

If a steroid injection has been given it may be necessary to take pain relieving tablets until the injection begins to take effect.

The injection is not a cure for the pain felt in the joint. The degree of pain relief and the length of time it lasts vary from person to person. After a period of time has elapsed an injection may be repeated, but this decision will be at the discretion of the Consultant's team.

Complications

As with all procedures there is a risk of complications, some are minor but in rare cases can be serious and life threatening.

Complications specific to this procedure include:

- Bruising at the injection site
- Septic arthritis
- Worsening of the pain which can be short lived or prolonged
- Skin atrophy at the site of the injection
- Joint damage
- Reaction to injected therapeutic substance
- Underlying nerve or blood vessel damage

A member of the Consultant's team will discuss the risks involved to you with this procedure. If you are worried or unsure about any part of the procedure or your care do not hesitate to discuss with a member of the health care team.

Contact telephone numbers (Monday to Friday)

Wrightington Hospital (Ward 1) 01257 256272 – 7am until 7pm.

D Ward 01257 256269 – 7am until 7pm.

Orthopaedic Admissions Unit (OAU) – 01257 256219 – 9am until 5pm.

Outpatient Department 01257 256299 – 9am until 5pm.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

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Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
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Wigan
WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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