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Information for patients Therapeutic Injections



Musculoskeletal Service Shropshire & Telford (MSST)

(formerly Shropshire Orthopaedic Outreach Service 'SOOS'
/Telford Musculoskeletal Service TeMS)

What is a therapeutic injection?

The injection may contain steroid, local anaesthetic, or both. Steroids are anti-inflammatory which can reduce pain and swelling. Local anaesthetics numb the area temporarily. This can help with diagnosis and can make the injection more comfortable.

What are the benefits of a therapeutic injection?

Injections can reduce pain and swelling related to soft tissue and joint conditions. The response to injection varies. Most people will notice an improvement in their symptoms. For some people, the effect lasts for a few months or more. Others notice improvement for only a few weeks, or not at all. Steroid injections are normally given as part a wider management plan.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects after injection are uncommon. However, potential side effects include:

- Post-injection pain/discomfort. This usually settles by itself within a few days
- Infection is rare (occurs between 1 in 3,000 and 1 in 50,000 injections). **If the area becomes red, hot, swollen and painful, or you become unwell, this needs urgent medical attention in A&E.**
- Allergic reaction
- Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) is extremely rare but is a medical emergency. This is most likely to happen shortly after having the injection. **We ask that you wait in the clinic for 30 minutes after your injection**
- Change in skin colour or thinning of the fat under the skin. This can last for a number of months, and in some cases is permanent
- Bruising/bleeding – most common if you have a blood clotting disorder or are taking blood thinners

Notes:

Patient Label:	Clinician:
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Location of injection:	Date:
Steroid:	Local anaesthetic:
Dose:	Volume/dose:

- Altered diabetic control/raised blood sugars which normally lasts 1-2 days. **People with diabetes should monitor their blood sugars after an injection. Please contact your GP or diabetic team if you have any concerns**
- Nerve damage
- Soft tissue weakening which could result in a tendon tear/rupture
- Sterile abscess
- Facial flushing
- Weakened immune system. This may make you more vulnerable to infection for a few weeks. **Please wait at least 2 weeks before any planned vaccines. Tell your clinician if you are due to have surgery**
- Vaginal bleeding outside of the normal menstrual cycle. Please contact your GP if this occurs
- Fainting, dizziness, low blood pressure or slow pulse
- Mood changes. This is more likely if you have a history of mental health issues. Please discuss any concerns with your GP
- Blurred vision due to central serous chorioretinopathy. **Contact your GP/A&E straight away if you notice any changes to your vision.**

Are there any reasons that I should not have a therapeutic injection?

Injection is not suitable if you have any of the following.
PLEASE TELL YOUR CLINICIAN:

- Allergy to steroids or local anaesthetics
- Feeling unwell or recent infection/antibiotics
- Recent or planned surgery or dental work
- Recent vaccinations

In some cases, injection will need to be discussed with a doctor first. for example, if you have:

- cancer
- diabetes
- blood clotting problems
- compromised immune system
- pregnant or breast feeding

Are there any other options?

- Lifestyle changes such as rest and modifying your activities
- Physiotherapy/Exercise
- Hot or cold packs
- Pain relieving anti-inflammatory gel
- Anti-inflammatory medicines (if suitable)
- Sometimes a surgical opinion

What can I expect after my therapeutic injection?

Local anaesthetic (if included) wears off after a few hours. Some people notice a flare-up of their pain after the injection. This usually settles by itself within a few days. If this happens, taking simple painkillers can help. The steroid starts to work within days. Some people will not notice a change in their pain straight away.

If the area becomes red, hot, swollen and painful or you become unwell, please go to A&E straight away.

Do I need to do anything after the therapeutic injection?

1. You will be asked to wait in the clinic for 30 minutes after your injection.
2. Remove the plaster the following day.
3. Unless advised otherwise, rest as much as possible for 2 days after the injection. Keep the area moving but don't overdo things for 2 weeks. The steroid may affect the strength of your soft tissues and lead to injury.

Can I drive after the therapeutic injection?

It is best not to drive straight away, so please make other arrangements. If this is not possible, please discuss with your clinician. The DVLA advises that anyone unable to control their vehicle should not drive.

What if the therapeutic injection does not work?

There is a limit to the number of times an area should be injected. If there is no improvement, contact your clinician to talk about other management options.

To arrange a follow-up appointment, please contact **0808 1754001**.

Should your problem change or worsen before any future appointment, please contact the service, NHS 111 or your GP.