

Injections and you

Injections into the soft tissues and joints can be effective in giving pain relief for certain conditions. Improvement is variable and can be temporary.

The injection that is normally administered includes a small amount of steroid and a local anaesthetic. The conditions that may benefit from such injections are:

- rotator cuff impingement
- AC joint arthritis
- early stage of frozen shoulder
- tennis elbow
- golfers' elbow
- DeQuervains' tenosynovitis
- trigger fingers
- early arthritis in the small joints of the hand

Many of these injections are easy and quick to perform. Sometimes it is necessary to inject small joints of the hand under x-ray control. The x-ray will confirm that the drugs are injected in the right place.

After the injection is administered, a small plaster is applied. Keep the plaster in place for one day.

Be careful with the use of the injected area for about 24 hours after the injection. In some patients, pain may be felt and symptoms may worsen for 2-3 days. The pain will gradually ease but take painkillers if you are unable to cope with the pain.

Gradually resume all activities but avoid repetitive movements of the affected area and activities that originally aggravated your condition.

Steroid injections can be repeated if needed. However the responses usually give diminishing returns after the initial injection.

There is a small risk of developing infection at the site of the injection. If there is a significant increase in pain with redness and swelling, there may be an infection, and immediate medical advice sought.

The injection can cause some thinning of the area, with colour change of the skin at the site. This discolouration will appear more pronounced in darker skin.

If you are a diabetic, you are advised to watch your blood sugar levels as the steroid injection may affect them for a few days.

Facial flushing may occur but should pass within 2 days. Very rarely female patients may experience temporary menstrual disturbance.



Mr Vinay Takwale MB,MS, FRCS
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

You can take other medicines with the steroid injections. However if you are taking any drugs that thin the blood (anti-coagulants like warfarin) you must advise the doctor who is administering the injection.

Be aware that Cortisone injections are subject to drug testing rules for elite sport people.

Your situation will be reviewed by Mr Vinay Takwale within 4-6 weeks of having the injection. The response to the injection will be assessed and ongoing treatment recommended.

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