

## **Steroid Injection Treatment information**

Inflammatory conditions of tendons and joints may be treated effectively by injections of steroid and local anaesthetic. Some of the conditions that may be treated in this way are:

- Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid arthritis of joints such as the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle along with small joints of the hands and feet.
- Conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger, tennis and golfers elbow or plantar fasciitis.
- Tendonitis and bursitis around the shoulder, elbow, wrist and hip.

This is an effective, low risk treatment and although there may be some discomfort associated with the injection itself, most patients are surprised at how little pain they experience. Please inform the doctor if you are allergic to plasters.

As with any treatments there are some risks and side effects:

- It is common to experience some stiffness for 24 hours afterwards. There is often an immediate improvement in symptoms following the injection. This is a temporary effect due to the local anaesthetic which wears off after about an hour. The steroid component has its effect within a couple of days as it starts to reduce inflammation in the affected area. Patients are advised not to overuse the limb for 24 hrs after the injection e.g. driving long distances or playing golf.
- Injections are not placed directly into tendons but rather into the area surrounding them. Despite this, there is a minimal risk of tendon damage or rupture but this is very rare.
- Thinning and depigmentation of the skin can occur at the site of injection but this is rare.
- There is a theoretical risk of infection with joint injections. Steroids reduce the body's resistance to infection and suppress the immune system. If you have a temperature (going hot and cold, feeling feverish) please inform your practitioner.

Treatment after the injection may include physiotherapy and an appointment will be booked with your consultant so that they can review progress. Most conditions will settle with one injection and it is unusual to need anymore than two.

Many patients express concerns about steroids and their side effects. Single injections into joints or around tendons will not turn you into a Russian weightlifter!

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