



MEDICAL ULTRASOUND

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Ultrasound-guided Injection: Information leaflet

Why are ultrasound-guided steroid injections performed?

Local steroid injections are given to reduce inflammation and pain within the joint or around a tendon or ligament. They are frequently recommended for people with inflammatory conditions affecting joints, tendons and ligaments. They may also be recommended for treating osteoarthritis, if the joints are inflamed.

About the procedure

An ultrasound-guided scan + injection takes approximately 20 minutes to perform. The ultrasound scan will show exactly and precisely, where the inflammation is. This information will ensure that the injection is given to the exact location required.

On occasions, after performing the ultrasound scan, the decision may be made, after mutual discussion, not to progress to an injection, as this may not be the correct line of treatment for you at that stage.

You will be asked to complete a consent form for the professional to perform the scan. You will then be asked to verbally consent for the injection to be performed, should the scan results recommend this procedure. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

After the correct area is located, the skin will be numbed with an injection of local anaesthetic. This is done using sterile technique to minimise the risk of infection.

Once the skin is numb, the needle is then guided accurately to the target/joint and a combination of local anaesthetic (Lignocaine or Marcaine) and an anti-inflammatory steroid (Kenalog) is injected into the relevant area.

Who will do my scan?

A specialist doctor (Consultant Musculoskeletal Radiologist) who is especially trained in ultrasound and image guided procedure will perform the scan. We sometimes have trainees in the department who are observing/learning under supervision. This will be indicated to you at the time of scanning.

Do I need to prepare for my scan?

There are no dietary requirements needed for this scan.

You should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing for your scan to easily expose body parts to be scanned. You will need to remove clothing and jewellery in the area to be examined.

Please ensure you tell us if you have any allergies, particularly to local anaesthetic.

If you are taking warfarin tablets, please stop them 3 days prior to the injection, if possible after discussing with your GP.

You will not be able to drive after your procedure. You should organise transport home after your procedure.

Pain Diary Questionnaire

We will issue you a pain diary questionnaire to monitor the response to the treatment. Please can you complete the pain score (between 0 to 10, 0 being no or trivial pain and 10 being extreme pain) before the injection/procedure, on a bad day in the last two weeks. The questionnaire will also ask you to score your pain after the procedure at key time intervals. This enables you to monitor the response to the injection as well as the Apex Radiologist getting a clearer picture of your body's response for any future needs.

Please can you email the completed questionnaire back to clinic@apexultrasound.uk. This will then be shared with your Radiologist, where an updated report will be sent to the professional who referred you to us. We will also use your scores as part of our quality assurance process.

We will send gentle reminder emails to you after your procedure at week 1, 2 and 4 weeks post your appointment to remind you to complete and return your completed Pain Diary questionnaire.

After the procedure

You will not be able to drive home. Please arrange alternative transport. This is because your car insurance will not cover you for 6-8 hours, as long as your local anaesthetic is working. You can resume driving after 8 hours.

You should rest the affected area as much as possible for the first 1-2 days after the procedure. You can remove the dressing the next morning.

You should keep the injected joint/soft tissue moving gently for the first 48 hours and take it easy. Please avoid heavy/physical work, repetitive movements or your normal aggravating position/movements. Take regular painkillers for the next 24 hours, if needed. You may need to commence physiotherapy after one week. Your GP or Consultant Specialist will advise you if this is required.

What are the possible side effects?

Every caution to minimise the risk of side effects will be taken by the consultant. The following side effects are rare but you should be aware of the risks.

- ❖ Post injection "Flare" - pain within the first 24 hours.
- ❖ Bruising around the injection site.
- ❖ Tendon injury - minimised with ultrasound guidance.
- ❖ Those with a Diabetic diagnosis - may experience a rise in blood sugar levels, which should subside in a few days.
- ❖ Disruption in menstrual cycle.
- ❖ Mood disturbance.
- ❖ Facial flushing (up to 24 hours).
- ❖ Locally skin dimpling/discolouration around the injection site.
- ❖ Infection risk is (1 in 1000 to 3000). If you notice any swelling, redness or heat around the injection site (worsening after 48-72 hours) or if you develop a high temperature, you should contact your GP or local hospital as soon as possible.

You will be able to discuss any of these points at the time of appointment. Our Radiologist will also explain these possible side effects and risks prior to gaining your consent for the procedure.

Do steroid local anaesthetic injections affect fertility or pregnancy?

Single steroid injection should not affect fertility of pregnancy, however, if you are pregnant – you should discuss this with the doctor before having an injection.

Do they affect breastfeeding?

Joint injections are rarely needed when breastfeeding. If you are given an injection, a small amount of this can pass into your breast milk. While this is unlikely to be harmful to your baby, you should discuss these risks with your GP.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like any further information about local steroid injections, or if you have any concerns about treatment, you should discuss with your GP, Orthopaedic Surgeon or Rheumatologist.

Apex