

Cortisone Injection

Being injected with cortisone is simple and doesn't take long. Your doctor may ask you questions about your health before the injection. Certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, can be affected by cortisone. Cortisone is a type of steroid. It can greatly reduce inflammation in a joint, bursa, or tendon. Cortisone (or a synthetic steroid) is unlike the steroids some athletes take. It won't make you gain weight or get bigger muscles. Since it's injected into an inflamed region and is not taken as a pill, little of it goes beyond that region. With oral steroids, side effects can occur throughout the body. But with a steroid injection for local inflammation, you're not likely to have those side effects.

Injecting cortisone gets directly into the inflamed region quickly. Your doctor may suggest an injection if resting, wearing a splint, or taking oral medication doesn't relieve your pain. Injecting cortisone is less complex than having surgery. And cortisone often provides the lasting pain relief that can help you get out and enjoy life again.

What does the Injection Treat?

Injecting cortisone can relieve pain for anything from sports injuries to arthritis. You may have an injection for treating inflammation, a sprain, or other problems. Steroid injections will relieve your pain if the primary problem is swelling, irritations, or inflammation. Depending on the underlying cause of your problem, the steroid injection may provide relief for a varying amount of time.

Getting the Injection

Your doctor may start by cleaning the injection site. It may take a moment for your

doctor to get the needle to the precise region. A small bandage will then be applied over the injection site. You'll then be ready to go home.

The Next Day or Two

Some patients feel more pain after being injected. This is normal, and it will go away soon. Rest for the first day or two. You don't need to stay in bed. But, avoid tasks that will strain the injured region. After being injected, make sure you don't injure the treated region. But stay active! Enjoy a walk or some other mild activity. Just be careful not to strain the region that gave you trouble.

Risks and Complications

Being injected with cortisone has certain risks and possible complications. These include:

- Briefly increased pain for one or two days
- Changes in blood sugar levels. Occasionally, elevated blood sugar levels and increased insulin requirements may occur in diabetics
- A rare risk of infection in the area injected
- Swelling and fluid retention in patients with heart failure
- Ruptured tendon (tissue that connects muscle to bone). This rare complication is more likely if the steroid is injected around or into certain tendons

Total complication rates are generally low. The risk of steroid injections is small compared with more complex treatments such as surgery.