Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Hyaluronate Injections in Your Knee

This information explains what hyaluronate (hai-uh-LUR-uh-nayt) injections (shots) are. It also explains what to expect before, during, and after your hyaluronate injections in your knee.

About hyaluronate injections

Hyaluronate is a medicine that's used to treat knee pain caused by osteoarthritis. There are many brand names for hyaluronate injections, such as Hymovis®, Orthovisc®, and Euflexxa®.

Osteoarthritis is a disease in which the cartilage (protective tissue at the ends of bones) of your joint wears down. This can lead to pain and swelling.

Hyaluronate is used when you still have pain after trying other treatments for osteoarthritis. This medicine is injected into your joint and should help with the pain when you move.

Most people get the injections once a week for 2 to 5 weeks in a row, depending on which medicine you get. The pain relief from hyaluronate injections may last from several weeks to a few months.

Read *Hyaluronate and Derivatives* (www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/patient-education/medications/adult/hyaluronate-and-derivatives) to learn more about your injection.

Before your hyaluronate injection

Before your injection, tell your doctor if you:

- Are allergic to latex or any medicines.
- Have an infection near your knee joint where you'll get the injection.
- Are currently getting chemotherapy.
- Are taking any of these medicines:
  - Aspirin or medicines that have aspirin in them.
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®).
  - Medicines that prevent blood clots, such as warfarin (Coumadin®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®), rivaroxaban (Xarelto®), dabigatran (Pradaxa®), apixaban (Eliquis®), or heparin.

During your hyaluronate injection

You will need to sign a consent form the first time you get your hyaluronate injection. A consent form is a form that says you agree to the procedure and understand the risks.

Your doctor may do an ultrasound scan to decide where to do the injection. An ultrasound is an imaging scan that uses sound waves to make a picture. Then, they will examine your joint and clean the area. Some people may get an injection of local anesthesia (medicine that numbs an area) before getting the hyaluronate injection.

During your hyaluronate injection, you should only feel some pinching as your doctor puts the needle through your skin and injects the medicine. After they inject the medicine, your doctor will take out the needle and clean the injection site (the spot where you got the injection). They will place a small bandage (such as a Band-aid®) over the site.

After your hyaluronate injection

Follow these guidelines after your hyaluronate injection.

- Keep the injection site dry and keep a clean bandage over the site for 24 hours.
- Do not take a bath, use a hot tub or sauna, go swimming, or submerge yourself in water for 2 days after your procedure.
- Do not use hot or warm packs on the site for 24 hours after your injection.
- Do not put any creams or topical medicines (medicines you put on your skin) on the injection site for 24 hours.
- Ask your doctor if you should avoid any activities or movements, such as standing for long periods, jogging, or lifting heavy objects.
- The site may be sore for a few days. Ask your doctor about taking pain medicine.
- Your knee may feel stiff or you may feel a spongy sensation when you walk. This may last for 2 to 3 days.
- You may not feel relief from your knee pain until after your last injection.
- You can put a cold pack on your knee for 10 to 15 minutes every 4 hours to help with any discomfort.
- After your injection, you can take your usual prescription or over-the-counter (medicines you buy without a prescription) pain medicine (such as Advil, Aleve, or Tylenol®) to help with any pain you're feeling.

Side effects of hyaluronate injections

Side effects are rare. Your knee may feel slightly tender or stiff following the injection. Most people don't have any other reaction to their hyaluronate injection.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of these signs of infection:

- A fever of 100.4° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- Pain at the injection site that doesn't start to feel better after 48 hours (2 days).
- Redness or swelling where you got the shot.
- Bruising or discoloration where you got the shot.
- Warmth in or by your knee.
- Back pain.
- Muscle pain.
- Higher blood pressure than usual.
- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up).
- Skin irritation, such as a rash or itching.
- Any new or unexplained symptoms.

Call 911 if you:

- Have any signs of an allergic reaction, such as a rash, red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin, trouble breathing, or swelling in your mouth, face, lips or throat.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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