PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Steroid Injections

This information will help you get ready for your steroid injection (shot).

About steroid injections

Steroid injections are used to help with swelling, stiffness, and pain in your body. They're usually given to treat:

- Arthritis (painful swelling and stiffness of your joints).
- Tendonitis, which is inflammation in a tendon (tissue that attaches muscle to bone).
- Bursitis (inflammation in the area around a joint).

You can get the injection in your joint or the area around your joint. The most common sites for steroid injections are the:

- Shoulder
- Hip
- Finger
- Wrist
- Knee

It may take up to 7 to 10 days for you to feel the full effects of the steroid. Depending on your condition, the effects can last for weeks or a few months.

Before your procedure

Speak with your healthcare provider

Tell your healthcare provider the following information before your procedure:

- If you're taking any:
  - Prescription or over-the-counter medications (medications you buy without a prescription), including patches and creams.
  - Herbal supplements.
  - Dietary supplements, such as multivitamins.
  - Chemotherapy.
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil®), and naproxen (Aleve®).
  - Medications that prevent blood clotting, such as:
    - Warfarin (Coumadin®).
    - Clopidogrel bisulfate (Plavix®).
    - Tinzaparin sodium (Innohep®).
    - Dalteparin sodium (Fragmin®).
    - Enoxaparin (Lovenox®).
    - Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®).
    - Heparin.
- If you're allergic to:
  - Any medications.
  - Latex.
  - Adhesive tape.
  - Lidocaine.
  - Antiseptic solution (a substance used to kill germs and bacteria).
- If you have an infection anywhere in your body.

- If you have a history of bleeding disorders.

You may have to stop taking some medications before your procedure. **Don't stop taking any medications unless instructed by your healthcare provider.**

Before your procedure, someone will call you and tell you the time and location of your procedure.

Day of your procedure

- Your healthcare provider will talk with you about the risks and benefits of having the steroid injection and ask you to sign a consent form.
- You will be given a gown and asked to take off any clothing that covers the affected joint.
- You will sit or lay in a position that allows your healthcare provider to give you your injection. They may use an ultrasound to help find the best place for your injection. Then, your healthcare provider will clean the area and inject a mixture of the steroid and a numbing medication.
- Most people say that the injection isn't painful. Any discomfort should go away in a few minutes as the numbing medication starts working.

After your procedure

- The numbing medication usually wears off in 3 to 4 hours. After it wears off, you may feel some soreness in your joint. The soreness may last for up to 48 hours until the steroid medication starts to work.
- If you feel sore, using a cold pack may help. Hold the cold pack on your joint for no more than 10 minutes, then remove it for 10 minutes. You can do this several times a day, as needed. Don't use cold packs if you have:
    - Problems with blood supply, such as Raynaud's Disease
    - Problems related to poor circulation
    - Nerve problems with poor sensation
- Keep a dry and clean bandage or Band-Aid® over the injection site for 24

hours.

- The site may be sore for a few days. Ask your healthcare provider about taking pain medication.
- Ask your healthcare provider if there are any activities or movements that you should avoid.
- Don’t use hot or warm packs on the site for 24 hours after your injection.

When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you :

- Have a fever of 100.3° F (38° C) or higher
- Have pain or swelling at the injection site that doesn’t start to feel better after 48 hours
- Start to have:
  - Skin irritation.
  - Increased redness, bruising, or discoloration.
  - Warmth.
  - Burning.
  - Itching around the injection site.
- Have any new or unexplained symptoms.
- Have any questions or concerns.

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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