



Midlands  
Orthopaedic Centre

# Trauma & Orthopaedics

Corticosteroid injections

Patient Information Leaflet



The Dudley Group  
NHS Foundation Trust

## **Introduction**

This leaflet is for people who are having a corticosteroid injection. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of having an injection and aims to answer some of the questions you may have, including what to expect after it. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor, nurse or physiotherapist caring for you. Please note that this leaflet does not list all of the uses and side effects of the medicines we use.

## **What is a corticosteroid injection?**

A corticosteroid (or cortisone) is an anti-inflammatory medicine which can be injected directly into the tissues that are causing your symptoms. It is a safer alternative to taking anti-inflammatory medication by mouth as it acts directly in the area injected. It is not the same as the steroids taken by bodybuilders or athletes.

## **What are the benefits?**

The injection can help to relieve swelling, pain and stiffness caused by inflammation. This may in turn help you to start your rehabilitation and return to normal activities sooner, by breaking the cycle of pain and inflammation. You may also have a local anaesthetic injected at the same time, which gives temporary pain relief. It can also be helpful to aid in the diagnosis of your condition if it is not clear which structures are responsible for your pain.

## **What are the risks?**

The possible side effects of the injection are rare and include:

- Flushing of the face for 24 to 48 hours.
- Small area of fat loss or change in skin colour around the injection site.
- Occasional increase in pain for 24 to 48 hours after the injection.
- People who have diabetes may notice a temporary increase in blood sugar levels.
- Temporary bruising or bleeding if you are taking blood thinning tablets (such as aspirin or warfarin).
- Infection. If the area becomes hot, swollen and painful for more than 24 hours, or if you feel generally unwell, you should contact Russells Hall Hospital on one of the numbers listed on the next page. The risk of this is very small.
- Slight vaginal bleeding and/or other menstrual irregularities.
- Allergic reaction to the drug.

## **What are the alternatives?**

Alternatives to the injection include lifestyle changes, use of

anti-inflammatory medicines and physiotherapy. Surgery may be an alternative for some people but this will depend on your individual condition. Your consultant will be able to discuss suitable alternatives for you in more detail.

## **What happens during the injection?**

The benefits and risks of the injection will be explained to you in detail. We will clean the skin in the area for the injection with antiseptic. The doctor will position a needle into the affected area and inject the solution through the needle. They will place a plaster over the site to keep it clean. You can take this off after 24 hours.

## **Will I feel any pain?**

The injection is not particularly painful as the doctor is thoroughly trained in this procedure. Sometimes it can be sore for a few hours after the procedure.

## **What happens after the procedure?**

If local anaesthetic is also used in the injection, your pain may start to improve within a few minutes. However, this may return when it wears off, similar to when you visit the dentist. The steroid usually starts to work after 24 to 48 hours but it may take a little longer. The effect of the injection varies from person to person and usually continues to last for about six weeks. This does not necessarily mean that you will need a second injection, as long as you follow the advice given to you after the injection.

## **What do I need to do after I go home?**

Depending on the cause of your pain, you may be asked to rest the area for a short period after the injection. This does not usually mean total rest but you should not do activities that make your pain worse. After this time, you should gradually return to your normal activities. This is to maximise the benefit given by the injection. You may also need physiotherapy treatment. If you are having other medical treatment within six weeks, you should tell the clinician treating you that you have had a corticosteroid injection.

**If you have any worries or concerns, or need to ask about returning to work or sport, please contact one of the following:**

- Virtual Fracture Clinic helpline on ext. 3547 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)  
Or email [dgft.vfc.dudley@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.vfc.dudley@nhs.net)
- Fracture Clinic on 01384 456111 ext. 2220 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- Emergency Department on 01384 456111 ext. 2300

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

**<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>**

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔