

CORTISONE INJECTION

What is a Cortisone Injection?

A cortisone injection is a shot with a needle into a joint (such as the wrist or knee) or a soft tissue space (the space between a muscle and a bone). The needle can be used to take fluid out or to put medicine into the joint. Pain relievers, such as lidocain or Marcain, and anti-inflammatory medicines such as corticosteroids (cortisone), are frequently used for injections. This procedure may be used to diagnose or treat problems including arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger, tennis elbow, bursitis, tendonitis, gout, joint swelling and plantar fasciitis. Injection of relatively less accessible joints, such as those in the spine, may be done under X-ray guidance. Injections may be repeated for the same condition several times, but are generally not recommended more often than every 3 months.

Another type of injection may be a preparation of hyaluronic acid which is used for osteoarthritis of the knee. It may give relief for up to 6-12 months when effective.

The Procedure

Once the problem area is identified, the skin is cleaned with a surgical solution and sprayed with a topical anesthetic, ethyl chloride, which numbs the skin. If necessary, fluid is removed from the area first. The pain caused by your condition will usually decrease and your symptoms improve several days after you get the injection. A few patients may experience a short period of pain after the injection. This is a normal reaction to the medicine. Putting ice on the site for 15 minutes at a time, several times a day and taking an over the counter pain reliever such as Tylenol® or Advil®, may decrease the discomfort. After the injection an adhesive bandage will be put on the injection site. You should keep the area clean for at least 24 hours after the injection.

Complications

The majority of cortisone injections are safe and effective; however, there is always the chance of unwanted side effects. Side effects include whitening and thinning of the skin at the injection site, infection, and tendon rupture. Call our office if you notice redness or swelling at the injection site, or if you have any other concerns.

Patients with diabetes should monitor their blood glucose (sugar) carefully for a few days after the shot, being alert for a higher than normal glucose level. Elevation of your glucose level usually only lasts for a day or two. Call your primary care doctor's office if you have any symptoms of high blood glucose or if your blood glucose level remains abnormally high.

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