

VISCOSUPPLEMENTATION

Viscosupplementation is a procedure where a gel-like fluid (hyaluronic acid) is injected into a joint. It is also known as a “rooster comb” injection. Viscosupplementation is a non-operative treatment option to help manage the symptoms associated with osteoarthritis and is primarily used for osteoarthritis of the knee joint. Osteoarthritis is the breakdown of the outer coating of bone, called cartilage, which is associated with inflammation and pain.

How Does It Work?

Hyaluronic acid (HA), the main ingredient in the injection, is a natural gel-like substance that is found within the synovial fluid of multiple joints of the body. The purpose of HA is to act as a lubricant much like oil in your car engine that allows bones to glide smoothly over one other. This helps with dissipating forces throughout the knee and helping to reduce the inflammation and pain caused by osteoarthritis. Viscosupplementation produces mechanical, pain reducing, anti-inflammatory and cartilage protection benefits.

The Procedure & Post-Procedure Care

Viscosupplementation may involve a single or a series of injections placed directly into the knee joint. The injection site will be sore a few days following the procedure. Applying ice and elevating the leg may help alleviate post-injection soreness. We recommend against intense physical activity for 48 to 72 hours after the injection.

Viscosupplementation takes several weeks before the injection becomes fully effective. The duration of relief from

the injection varies. Some patients may receive multiple months of relief. Some patients will get no response. The injection can be repeated every 6 months to a year, depending on insurance coverage.

Evidence of effectiveness of viscosupplementation is mixed, but the medication is very safe. Infrequently, patients have adverse reactions to viscosupplementation. A “pseudo-septic reaction” is an uncommon immune-related response that includes large amounts of joint swelling, redness, warmth, pain, and stiffness. The condition is benign and will resolve on its own. It mimics an infection so it is important to let your provider know if you experience these symptoms after an injection.

Common Brands of Viscosupplementation:

- Monovisc® (one injection)
- Synvisc One® (one injection)
- Supartz® (5 injection series, once per week for 5 weeks)
- Orthovisc® (3 injection series, once per week for 3 weeks)
- Euflexxa® (3 injection series, once per week for 3 weeks)

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