

Information for Patients having a Computerised Tomography (CT) Guided Joint Injection

Important Information

What is a CT guided joint injection?

Your doctor has referred you for a CT guided joint injection; CT is used to guide an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid into a joint. A dye may be injected at this point, please let the doctor know if you have any allergies to X-ray injections.

What are the risks of the procedure?

As with most procedures there is a small risk of bleeding, infection, nerve injury, or allergic reaction to the medications used. A very common side effect of nerve root injections is worsening of symptoms (about 1 in 3 patients). This is temporary and may last for 48 hours after the injection.

Each patient referred for an image-guided steroid injection should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in order to determine if the treatment is still suitable for current symptoms. All reasonable non-injection pain management measures should have been explored.

Is there any preparation?

Please sign at the bottom of this information sheet to confirm you have read the information and consent to proceed.

Note: The procedure cannot be performed if you are on blood thinning drugs (anticoagulants).

If you are taking any blood thinners (anticoagulants) such as Warfarin, clopidogrel, dabigatran, apixaban, rivaroxaban) or any others, these medications must be discontinued well before the procedure. Please make your **referring** doctor aware that you are taking a blood thinner so they can give you specific instructions about when to stop and restart the medication. These drugs are commonly prescribed to prevent stroke or heart attack so it is very important that you do not stop taking them without being instructed to do so by your doctor.

Steroid injections should not be performed within 2 weeks before or after a vaccine (including COVID); please telephone or email us (details above) so we can rearrange your appointment.

Special considerations during the SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) pandemic:

There is a small risk that steroid injections can temporarily reduce the ability of the immune system to fight infection. This effect can last from seven to forty days and as a result there may be an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 infection. This is not guaranteed to happen, but the risk cannot be eliminated. In severe cases of COVID, this may result in hospitalisation, intensive care support, and potentially (although rare) death.

Steroid medication is known to have a suppressive effect on the immune system that could lead to an increased risk of a worse outcome if patients become ill with an infection. Unfortunately these effects are poorly understood for coronavirus but we do know that coronavirus can result in becoming seriously unwell if contracted.

The overall effects of steroid injections and therefore the associated risks are small compared to oral or intravenous steroid preparations. However, we believe that it is better to avoid these risks where an injection can be safely delayed.

Steroid injection should only be considered by if your pain is severe and/or debilitating and all other appropriate treatments and/or pain therapies have been tried.

You should discuss carefully with your referring clinician the benefits versus risks of attending hospital (increased exposure risk), as well as temporary immunosuppression, especially if you are a vulnerable patient in the high risk group.

You should not attend for injection if you have symptoms of COVID-19, recently tested positive for COVID-19 or have had recent contact with a person with symptoms; please telephone us on 01603 288469 so we can reschedule your appointment.

How do I prepare for my examination?

- You do not have to follow a special diet or have any preparation for this test.
- If you think you are allergic to local anaesthetic, steroid, iodine or to the X-ray dyes, please telephone us on 01603 286108 Monday to Friday between 8am and 1pm.
- Please note that if you are taking Warfarin or any other blood thinning medicine such as aspirin or clopidogrel please call us on 01603 286108 as soon as you can, as you may need to stop taking these medications if safe to do so.

What happens when I arrive?

- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to wear a gown during the exam. You may also be asked to remove jewellery, spectacles and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images.
- You must tell the radiographer about any medicines you are taking and if you have any allergies, glaucoma or heart disease. Women between the ages of 12 and 55, will be asked if there is any possibility that you could be pregnant.

Will the injection be painful?

Most people say the stinging/burning of the local anaesthetic at the start of the injection is the most uncomfortable part of the procedure however, each person's response to any procedure will differ.

What happens at the time of the injection?

The doctor performing the injection will answer any specific questions you still have after reading this information leaflet. After signing a consent form the injection will be done in the CT room with you lying on the CT table (on your stomach for a lower back injection). Your skin will be cleaned thoroughly with an antiseptic and sterile drapes are placed around the area. The skin is anaesthetised (numbed) with a local anaesthetic, which may produce a brief stinging or burning sensation that goes away usually in 10 seconds. The needle is advanced to the proper location under CT guidance. A dye may be injected at this point -please let the doctor know if you have any allergies to X-ray injections. A mixture of local anaesthetic (numbing medicine) and steroid is then injected through the needle into the joint.

How long will it take?

The examination will take around 20 minutes.

How will I feel after the injection?

Your pain may (but not always) be improved immediately after the injection from the local anaesthetic. The steroid usually takes two or three days to have work but sometimes longer and may take 10 – 14 days. You may experience some local tenderness for a couple of days after the injection. You may take your usual pain medication after the procedure.

Will I have any restrictions on the day of the procedure?

It is important that you have a responsible adult to escort you home. You must not drive or use public transport for the journey home. It is recommended that you rest for the remainder of the day.

How do I get the results?

The Radiologist will study your CT scan and report the findings to your consultant. Your consultant will then contact you or arrange a clinic appointment where you will get the results of your scan.

Any Questions?

If you have any further questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please telephone the CT department or appointments office between 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this letter, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the Doctors looking after you.

Patient:

I have read the information above

Signed:..... Print Name:..... Date:.....

Access to Radiology

How to find us:	East Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 2 Radiology and then to CT. You can find more information at: www.nnuh.nhs.uk
Hospital transport:	To enquire about hospital transport telephone 0333 240 4100
Contact details:	Telephone: 01603 286081 Email: radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk Website: www.nnuh.nhs.uk

If you have any comments or suggestions about this letter, please contact us.

The Trust has to submit information to national registers monitoring imaging tests and scans and your anonymised images may be used for teaching and research purposes. All information is stored securely and confidentially. The Trust is a teaching hospital so students may perform or observe procedures.

If you do not want your anonymised data to be submitted to national registers, or a student involved in your procedure, please speak to a member of staff when you come to your appointment. Please be reassured that this will not prejudice your care in any way.

