

## **Important Information**

### **What is a Fluoroscopic Joint Injection?**

Your doctor has referred you for a Fluoroscopic Joint Injection, which is an x-ray examination of a joint, using a special form of x-ray called fluoroscopy. This is used to guide an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid into a joint, with a contrast material (dye) containing iodine to visualise the affected joint more clearly. Injections of local anaesthetic on its own are used to try and identify where pain is coming from, which then helps decide the best treatment.

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.

### **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?**

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

the COVID consent information form.

**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.**

Please note that if you are taking any blood thinning medicine such as warfarin, aspirin or clopidogrel this will increase your risk of bleeding. We do not require you to stop your medication for an injection.

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.

### **What does it involve?**

- The Radiologist will talk to you about exactly what is going to happen. A Radiographer and nurse may also be present.
- You will be positioned on the examination table.
- Initial x-rays of the joint will be taken.
- The skin around the joint is cleansed with antiseptic and a local anaesthetic is injected into the area.
- The contrast material (dye) is injected into the joint space to confirm the position of the needle, followed by injection with a combination of local anaesthetic and steroid.
- The skin is cleaned and dried and a plaster applied.

Your joint area will be numbed so you do not feel anything related to the procedure. Initially, you may experience a slight pinprick and momentary burning as the anaesthesia is injected into the joint area. You may feel fullness as the joint is filled with the dye and pain relief medication, and hear gurgling when the joint is moved.

### **How long will it take?**

The examination will take around 20 minutes.

### **Are there any side effects?**

During the day of the procedure patients usually feel quite comfortable because of the local anaesthetic. It is common for patients to feel more discomfort than usual at the site of injection for 24 to 48 hours, for which simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen are usually enough. Therefore it is usually recommended that patients rest for 2 days following a steroid injection, but we will advise you at the time depending on your particular circumstances. You should ask someone to

Information for Patients having: Fluoroscopic Guided Joint Injection

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accompany you to the hospital so they can drive you back after the procedure.

Any time a needle is used on someone there is a tiny risk of an infection (less than 1 in 100,000) which we are careful to prevent happening. You should contact your doctor if the area becomes painful and hot afterwards, particularly if you feel unwell in yourself.

Many patients experience a hot flushing sensation after a steroid injection which usually settles in a few minutes. If you are diabetic you may experience a rise in your blood sugar level for a few days after the injection. This will soon come back down and should not cause you any problems. Steroids may cause mood changes and may also cause disturbances to the menstrual cycle. Rarely the injection may cause thinning or changes to the colour of the skin at the injection site.

Steroid injections usually take a week or so to have an effect and can ease symptoms for a few months.

### **Further Information**

If you have any concerns or questions about your Fluoroscopic Joint Injection please telephone the X-Ray Department on 01603 286108, 8am to 1pm Monday to Friday.

"As a requirement of the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017, all patients undergoing an x-ray examination must be informed of the risk and benefits of proposed exposures.

For information on the risks please read the 'How safe are x-rays?' leaflet in the waiting room on arrival in the radiology department and/ or please find information at the following websites

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/x-ray/#are-x-rays-safe>

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/tests/x-rays>

<https://www.phe-protectionservices.org.uk/radiationandyou/>

If you have any further questions regarding this please ask a member of the Radiology Department during your visit."

### **Giving my consent (permission)**

The staff caring for you will ask your permission to perform the procedure. If there is anything you do not understand or you need more time to think about, please tell the staff caring for you. You may be asked to sign a consent form that says you have agreed to the procedure and that you understand the benefits, risks and alternatives.

### **Patient:**

I have read the information above

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

### **Accessing Radiology**

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How to find us: East Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 2 Radiology.

You can find more information at: [www.nnuh.nhs.uk](http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk)

Hospital transport: If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100

Contact details: Telephone: 01603 286108 8am to 4pm Monday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Email: [radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk)

Website: <http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/departments/radiology-nnuh>

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

