

Important Information

Introduction

Your doctor has referred you to the Radiology Department for an ultrasound examination and an ultrasound guided injection may be performed by the radiologist at their discretion if clinically appropriate.

The aim is to diagnose and/or treat your condition. To do this we inject a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid. 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.

What happens during the examination?

The radiologist or sonographer will explain the procedure to you and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. After cleaning your skin they will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area before injecting the steroid and local anaesthetic under ultrasound guidance.

Is there any preparation?

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

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.

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.

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 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.

When will you get the results?

The Radiology Department will send a report of your scan to the doctor who requested it immediately after the procedure.

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

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| How to find us: | East Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 2 Radiology and then to ultrasound. 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 288469 Email: ultrasound@nnuh.nhs.uk Website: www.nnuh.nhs.uk |

If you have any comments or suggestions about this leaflet, 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.

