

Introduction

Your doctor has referred you to the Radiology department for an ultrasound examination and an ultrasound guided injection. The aim is to either treat or diagnose your condition and in some instances to do both at the same time. 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.

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?

If you are taking Warfarin or any other blood thinning medicine such as Apixaban, Dabigatran, Rivaroxiban or Clopidogrel **please call us on 01603 288469** as soon as you can, as you may need to stop taking these medications. Your referring doctor will need to decide if it is safe to do so.

After cleaning your skin they will inject local anaesthetic to numb the area before injecting the steroid and local anaesthetic under ultrasound guidance.

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 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.

Are there any alternatives?

The procedure is being performed to reduce discomfort and/or help your doctor decide on future treatments. Although your symptoms could eventually settle on their own, many patients have already tried other options such as physiotherapy before being referred for an injection.

Finally

Further information is available from the Arthritis Research UK website

(<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/drugs/local-steroid-injections.aspx>)

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.

Access to Radiology

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:	If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100
Contact details:	Telephone: 01603 286728 Email: radiology@nnuh.nhs.uk Website: http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/departments/radiology-nnuh

Please note specialist services such as musculoskeletal and vascular ultrasound are only provided at the Norfolk & Norwich University NHS Foundation Trust (not Cromer Hospital).

