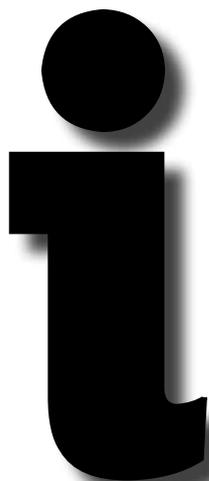


# ***Steroid injection into and around joints*** (page 1 of 2)



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: [www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily](http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily) or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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## **What is a steroid injection?**

Steroid injections are low dosage anti-inflammatory steroids injected into joints or soft tissues. They work by reducing tissue inflammation.

Steroid injections are often mixed with a local anaesthetic and the two are injected together. Local anaesthetic does not reduce inflammation but will allow almost immediate, but temporary, pain relief.

## **What are the benefits?**

The steroid should reduce the inflammation and pain within the joint and the surrounding area. This will make it easier for you to move and use the joint normally.

## **How quickly will the steroid injection take to work and how long will it last?**

This varies between patients but improvement usually starts within the first few days.

If the injection is helpful the benefit may last from a few weeks to several months.

## **Is the injection painful?**

Whilst most people find these injections uncomfortable rather than painful, we know people vary considerably in their response to pain. (In addition some people will have a joint that is already uncomfortable).

You may feel an ache or pressure feeling during the injection. This can be uncomfortable, but wears off quite quickly.

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

Side effects are unlikely and usually short lived.

- occasionally patients notice an increase in their joint pain within the first 24 hours after the injection. This usually settles by itself over a couple of days
- some patients have a facial flush after the injection, but again this is short lived
- any steroid injection can temporarily raise blood sugar levels in diabetics. If you are taking insulin you may need to increase your dose for a day or two

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- there is a very small risk of infection after a joint injection. If, after 48 hours, your joint becomes more painful or hot and throbbing you should consult your GP straight away or go to your nearest 24hour Casualty / Emergency Department. (Please tell the staff you have recently had a joint aspiration and or joint injection)
- if you have a soft tissue injection (near the skin surface) the steroid can occasionally cause some thinning of the skin locally. This is very rare but can be permanent. It is more noticeable if you have dark skin.

## What can I expect after the injection?

The joint sometimes becomes uncomfortable once the anaesthetic has worn off. This discomfort can last up to 48 hours. During this period you may take your usual pain relief plus paracetamol if needed. If you are already taking a non steroidal anti-inflammatory, paracetamol may be all that is required. Paracetamol is an effective pain killer and it is safe to take up to 8 (500mg) tablets a day, but you should not exceed this dose. Please be aware some 'over the counter' medicines may contain paracetamol, (such as cold /headache relief medications bought from a chemist).

## Can I drive after my injection?

We advise that you are driven home after an injection. Although you may be perfectly safe to drive it might invalidate any insurance cover were you to be involved in an accident however minor and even if you are not to blame.

## Do I need to rest after the injection?

You should rest the joint for the first day or two after the injection particularly after injections into the hip, knee or ankle joints (weight bearing joints).

## Further advice

If you require further advice please contact:

Day Surgery Unit 01722 336262 ext 4550 between 7.30am and 7pm

After 7pm contact your GP or the NHS 111 service.