



Steroid Injections for Knees, Elbows, Shoulders, Hips

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO PATIENTS FOLLOWING OFFICE INJECTIONS

In general, steroid injections are given to control inflammation reactions around bursae, joints, ligaments to control pain. They may be given with a local anesthetic, such as Marcaine or Lidocaine. The local anesthetic agent will usually numb the area for several hours. If a long acting anesthetic such as Marcaine is used, it may remain numb for 6-8 hours. The steroid injection will become effective in 2-3 days and may last for several weeks to months. The effectiveness for relief of pain and inflammation by steroid injections is not always predictable. Sometime they will help the pain and inflammation and, in other cases they are not effective.

Following a steroid injection, you should be protective of that joint or area of the body, particularly for the period of time that the local anesthetic has made the joint pain free. In some cases, there will be local bleeding due to the penetration of the needle, and you may experience some undue pain for 12-24 hours. In other cases, there can be a steroid reaction which is called a "flare reaction". This reaction may cause increased local redness and rather severe pain for 12-24 hours. If an injection is being given around a nerve, you may find that the local anesthetic will cause numbness in the area of the nerve distribution. Fore example, an injection around the inner elbow may cause numbness in the ring and little finger of the same hand.

For Diabetic patients it is important to know that blood sugar levels need to be monitored more frequently and managed more tightly as blood sugar values can sometimes "go up". Call your primary care doctor or emergency room if your blood sugars get elevated. After an injection, particularly in you experience any swelling, local redness, increased heat or increased pain, it is appropriate to use ice directly on that area of the skin for not more than 15 minute. But you can do this several times per day. If you use ice directly to the skin for longer than 15 minutes, you may experience an ice burn or local freezing of the skin which could be injurious. Ice can be applied every couple of hours until pain and local swelling subside.

If you experience pain after a local injection, generally a mild pain tablet such as Tylenol or Advil, or some form of anti-inflammatory will help relieve the pain. Very seldom is there a need for pain killers such as codeine, etc. If you have experienced severe pain in the past with local injections, it may be necessary to tell your doctor before hand. It is the policy of our office not to inject a steroid more than approximately three times a year into a joint. However steroids into the spine have different protocols. There can be detrimental effects for multiple steroid injections given repeatedly. It is not good idea to ask for a steroid injection for an anticipated increased activity level.

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