

Joint Steroid Injections

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Your health care provider wants to give you a joint steroid injection (shot). A steroid is a medicine used to treat inflammation (swelling, warmth or redness) in your joint.

You will receive a steroid injection and a local anesthetic (a numbing medicine) in the joint that is causing you pain.

Steroid injections can be given every 3 months (no more than four times a year). Each injection takes only a few minutes.

Before the Injection

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the injection. You may have some numbness that could affect your driving.
- Call your clinic nurse 1 week before your appointment if you take blood thinners such as warfarin (Jantoven[®]) or heparin. You will receive special instructions for taking these medicines before the injection.

During the Injection

- Your health care provider will give you an injection of local anesthetic. Then they will insert the needle directly into your joint. This may cause some discomfort.
- You may feel pressure as the medicine moves into your joint. You should not feel significant pain.

After the Injection

- You may have numbness that could limit your ability to do things like lifting, climbing stairs or operating machinery (depending on the affected joint).
- The injection site might be sore for a few days. You should place ice on the site three times a day for 20 minutes until the soreness is gone. Wrap a bag of frozen vegetables or an ice bag in a towel for comfort.
- You may also have pain a day or two after the injection. This is known as “steroid inflammatory” pain.

When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Infection is a potential complication. Call your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms along with a fever:

- unusual swelling
- progressive pain or ongoing headache
- warmth and redness in the injection area
- nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up).

Whom to Call for Information

Your health care provider will give you instructions on any other follow-up information you will need.

Call your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.