

Having an ultrasound-guided musculoskeletal (MSK) steroid injection



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who have been referred for an ultrasound-guided musculoskeletal (MSK) steroid injection. Your referring clinician should have discussed the reasons for the injection with you prior to referral. They should have also discussed the risks and benefits from having a steroid injection.

What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound uses sound waves at a non-harmful high frequency to examine organs, tissues, joints and muscles. Ultrasound can monitor existing conditions, diagnose certain conditions or rule out other diagnoses.

What is a steroid injection?

Steroid injections are used to ease pain and reduce swelling. The steroid is often injected in combination with a local anaesthetic. The injection may be into a painful joint but may also be used to treat inflammation in soft tissues, such as tendons, tennis elbow, plantar fasciitis or a Morton's neuroma.

What are the benefits? Are there any risks?

Ultrasound purely uses sound waves and there are no documented risks or side-effects.

The purpose of the injection is to reduce pain and/or inflammation in the affected joint or tendon injected – the injection process is made more accurate through the use of ultrasound guidance.

- There is a small risk of infection following injections. If you experience redness or swelling around the area injected or a high temperature, you should see your own GP or attend the Emergency department and explain you have recently had an injection.



- Female patients may notice their menstrual cycle is slightly irregular for a few months following a steroid injection.
- Patients with diabetes should closely monitor their blood for 5 days following the injection.
- There is a risk of facial flushing following steroid injection and you may develop a bruise.

How do I prepare for it?

- Please do not wear any perfumes or moisturisers on the area to be scanned.
- Wear clothing that is easily removed for access. You may need to remove items of clothing if they are restricting access to the required area.
- Please inform the clinician performing the injection if:
 - you are taking any blood thinning drugs such as Warfarin, Aspirin, Clopidogrel, Rivaroxaban and Zyban
 - you are diabetic, as the steroid injection may temporarily affect your sugar levels.

Please call our department on 01872 255188 if you are unsure how to prepare for your scan.

Are there any alternatives?

Alternatives to steroid injections may include physiotherapy or more systemic treatments (such as anti-inflammatory tablets). These treatments will usually have already been used before a steroid injection is considered.

Surgery is also a possibility in many conditions, but this is often reserved for when conservative measures have failed. You may discuss this option with your doctor.

What will happen?

The procedure will be explained to you and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. If your symptoms have changed since you were

referred or the clinician feels that the injection may be unsuitable for you, they will discuss this with you and inform the referring clinician.

- During the scan, a clear water based gel and an ultrasound probe will be placed on the area being scanned.
- The lights will be dimmed to allow the operator to view the imaging screen.
- Image selections will be made during the scan for storage on our imaging archive system.
- The clinician will identify the site for injection by moving the ultrasound probe over the area, with you either lying on a couch or sitting on a chair.
- Your skin will then be cleaned with a sterile solution.
- Local anaesthetic may be injected at the same time as the steroid, which will provide short-term pain relief. There may be more than one injection depending on the area being treated.
- The whole procedure should last between 15 to 30 minutes.

Although we try to run to appointment times, you may have to wait in the department if emergencies arise.

If you are waiting for more than 20 minutes past your appointment time, please notify a member of staff.

What happens afterwards?

Following your scan, the clinician will review the images and compile a report. This report will be sent to the referring clinician who originally requested the procedure. All results are usually available for your clinician to view within 24 hours.

If local anaesthetic has been injected you may not feel any pain for a few hours afterwards. The area may feel uncomfortable and once the anaesthetic wears off you may feel increased pain for a few days.

Depending on the type of injection you may not be able to drive for between 4 to 6 hours afterwards. You therefore need to arrange for

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

