

Steroid Injections

Why do I need a local steroid injection?

An intra-articular injection is given to reduce inflammation, swelling and pain within a joint.

A peri-articular injection is given to reduce pain and inflammation in the soft tissues near a joint.

For example, if you have tennis elbow your doctor may inject the tender area.

How long will the steroid injection take to work, and how long will it last?

This varies between different people, but usually improvement starts in 1–2 days. If it is helpful, the benefit usually lasts from a few weeks to several months.

Do I need to rest after the injection?

It is advisable to rest the injected limb as much as possible for the first 1–2 days after an intra-articular injection.

What are the possible side-effects?

Side-effects are very unlikely. Very occasionally people notice a flare in their joint pain within the first 24 hours after an injection. This usually settles spontaneously over the next couple of days. Very rarely infection might be introduced into the joint at the time of an injection and so if the joint becomes more painful and hot then you should consult your doctor immediately.

Occasionally with peri-articular and articular injections some thinning or loss of colour of the skin may occur at the injection site. Local steroid injections may sometimes cause facial flushing or interfere with the menstrual cycle.