An appointment has been made for you to attend the Radiology (x-ray) Department for the following: Injection under ultrasound control

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DRIVE YOURSELF HOME. PLEASE ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO COLLECT YOU AFTER THE PROCEDURE.

You may take any prescribed drugs and medicines as usual.

**Ultrasound of a joint, limb or soft tissue structures**

Ultrasound is the safe and painless use of sound waves to produce images of the internal structures of a joint, limb or soft tissue structures. They can be seen as black and white pictures on a television monitor.

The procedure involves the injection of a steroid (cortisone) into and around an affected joint or bursa (the protective cushioning around the joint). This sometimes relieves the pain the patient is getting. The injection is carried out with the help of ultrasound guidance.

**What happens before my examination?**

There is no preparation required.

**What will happen during the examination?**

The area to be treated is exposed and cleaned with a special alcohol solution and a clean sterile drape is placed over the area to be scanned. The skin over the joint is numbed with local anaesthetic which may sting a little. Some cold gel will be applied to the area being examined and a smooth-surfaced ultrasound probe will be moved across this part of your body. The gel will enable good contact between the probe and your skin. This is essential because sound waves do not travel well by air. This procedure may be referred to as a ‘scan’.

The doctor will then position a fine needle into the joint under ultrasound guidance. Once the needle is in position the injection of cortisone (steroid) is given, along with additional, longer acting, local anaesthetic.

The probe will send out sound waves of a very high frequency. You will not be able to hear or feel them but they will be reflected back by the structures (organs, blood vessels) in their pathway and turned into pictures displayed on a TV monitor.

All of our sonographers/radiologists have been specially trained to carry out the procedures and interpret the ultrasound image.
The procedure takes between 10-20 minutes. After the scan, the gel will be wiped off your skin.

**What happens after?**
You will need to stay in the hospital for at least 30 minutes after the injection to make sure you don’t have any immediate side effects and you must not drive yourself home. You should try to have a friend or relative stay with you for the first 24 hours after the procedure.

You may experience some discomfort in the joint for a few days and it may feel a little bruised. We normally suggest you take things gently and easily during this time and reduce significantly activities which involve using the treated area for a few days.

You should not put any strain on this area for three weeks while the steroid works. The pain relieving effect of these injections may not be apparent for a week or two.

**How quickly does the injection work and how long does it last?**
If you have a local anaesthetic injected with the steroid, you may not have any pain for the first few hours. However, when the local anaesthetic wears off, your pain may be worse than before the injection. After the initial increase in discomfort most people notice an improvement within a week. However, it may take a good few weeks for the steroid to work. The benefit can last for months and is sometimes permanent.

**What are the risks and benefits?**
Joint injections are safe and simple. You may have some numbness or weakness that may last a few hours. Very rarely, bleeding from the site or an allergic reaction to the drugs may occur. The injected cortisone (steroid) stays in the joint and reduces the inflammation. Only a tiny amount reaches the bloodstream, and this is not an amount that will cause any detrimental effect.

To date, research has shown medical ultrasound to be a safe examination. Unlike other types of imaging, such as X-rays, it does not use radiation and so has none of the associated risks. The benefit of having an ultrasound is that, by using this safe and usually painless procedure, doctors will be able to find out information about the inside of your body.

**Are there any alternatives?**
Yes, there may be other options depending on what part of your body is being scanned. If you choose not to have an ultrasound for any reason, the doctor who referred you to us will be informed. The doctor will then advise you of any other appropriate alternative examinations, for example, a CT scan or MRI scan.

**Who do I contact for more information?**
If you have any further queries regarding the procedure, please feel free to ask questions on the day of your examination or speak to your referring clinician.
Where to find us:
Please use the pay and display visitor car park signposted to your left as you drive in to the hospital grounds. Current charges and further information may be found on our website www.qvh.nhs.uk.

The X-ray (Radiology) Department is situated inside the clock tower entrance and is also accessible inside from the main corridor as you walk in from the car park.

Should you have any other concerns or further questions regarding your appointment please contact:

X-ray (Radiology) department: 01342 414251

Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm.

Further hospital information:

We hope you find your visit to the hospital a pleasant experience. We would like to hear your comments, as we are constantly trying to improve our service to you.

Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or an alternative format.