

## Hand Therapy

### Corticosteroid Injection

#### **What are corticosteroid injections used for?**

Corticosteroid (steroid) injections are used to help relieve pain and inflammation in joints and soft tissues. They may also be used to help make a diagnosis.

#### **What will the injection involve?**

After we have assessed your condition, we may offer you a steroid injection as part of your treatment. Once you are happy that you understand the risks and benefits of this and decide that you would like to proceed, we will check your medical history to see if it is safe for you to have it. You should ask any questions you wish during this time. We will inject the steroid into the affected area with a small needle. You may feel some discomfort whilst this is taking place (and for 1-2 days afterwards). We may include a local anaesthetic to make the injection more comfortable. The steroid can take up to two weeks to have an effect.

#### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits are a potential reduction in symptoms, including a reduction in pain and inflammation and therefore an increase in the range of movement.

#### **What are the risks?**

Steroid injections may have side effects. These include, but are not limited to:

- an increase in pain shortly after the injection
- swelling, bleeding and bruising around the injection site
- facial flushing
- a temporary increase in blood sugar levels in diabetic patients
- a temporary change in menstrual bleeding
- a loss of fat, or change of colour to the skin (particularly in darker skins) or dimpling in the area around the injection site (a cosmetically poor appearance)
- a lack of improvement in symptoms
- the return of symptoms

There have been reports of more serious reactions but these are uncommon, for example:

- allergic reactions
  - infection
  - tendon ruptures (permanent reduced movement)
  - nerve injury (permanent tingling or numbness and/or loss of movement)
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### **What should I do after the steroid injection?**

Please wait in the department for 15 minutes after you have received the injection to check that you have no adverse reactions.

If you feel well and your hand and arm are comfortable after this time you can go home. If you feel well enough, you may drive yourself home.

You should rest your hand and arm for 24 hours after your injection, avoiding lots of movement and heavy use. If needed, take your normal pain relief.

### **What if it doesn't work?**

If the steroid injection does not relieve your symptoms, it may be appropriate for you to have a second injection or a different treatment. We will discuss these options with you at your follow-up appointment.

### **Are there alternatives to having a steroid injection?**

There are alternatives to having a steroid injection. These may include oral anti-inflammatory medication, splinting, exercises, changes to lifestyle, surgery or a decision not to treat the symptoms. These options are not all available for every condition. Your therapist will discuss options with you to help you make a decision regarding your treatment.

### **What should I do if I have any concerns after the injection?**

If you have any queries about your injection please contact the Hand Therapy department (telephone number at the bottom of the page) and ask to speak to your therapist. The department is open 8am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. If you have pain that rapidly gets worse in the first two days after the injection this may mean an infection is present and you should contact us for medical advice immediately. (If the Hand Therapy department is closed, please contact the Minor Injuries Unit, **out of hours**, before 10pm, on 01342 414376 or the hospital switchboard, on 01342 414000, at any time.)

To book, cancel or change therapy appointments call: **01342 414004**

To speak to a therapist for clinical advice or queries call: **01342 414072**

Information at [www.qvh.nhs.uk](http://www.qvh.nhs.uk) - Our services/Therapies/Hand Therapy



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