

Patient Information Leaflet

The Adam Practice

Hamworthy Surgery, 306 Blandford Road, Hamworthy,
BH15 4JQ. Tel: 01202 679234

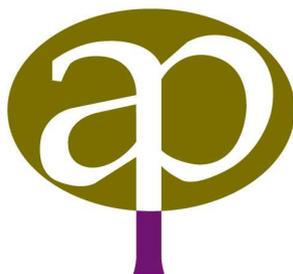
Poole Surgery, 117 Longfleet Road, Poole, BH15 2HX
Tel: 01202 676111

Upton Surgery, Upton Cross, Poole, BH16 5PW
Tel: 01202 622339

Heath Cottage Surgery, 40 High Street, Lytchett Matravers,
BH16 6BG. Tel: 01202 632764

Website: www.adampractice.co.uk

Email (for all sites): theadam.practice@dorset.nhs.uk



THE ADAM PRACTICE

Joint Injections

For further information visit

www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Steroid injections are commonly used for the treatment of joint and soft tissue disorders. Steroids have been shown to be helpful for easing pain and reducing high levels of inflammation. They may also protect the cartilage within joints.

Steroid injections are often used in conjunction with local anaesthetic. There are several different formulations of both steroid and anaesthetic which may be used.

This information leaflet is intended go alongside the advice you will be given by your doctor with regard to steroid injections in your particular circumstances.

WHAT IS A JOINT INJECTION AND WHY HAVE I BEEN GIVEN ONE?

When your joints are swollen and tender we often put a needle into your joints to draw out fluid and inject steroid into them. The steroid will reduce the swelling and pain you have. Joint injections are done for people with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and many other conditions. Sometimes we inject into the tissues around joints as well because this can sometimes help with conditions such as lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow).

WHAT HAS BEEN INJECTED INTO MY JOINTS?

We inject a small amount of steroid, and your Doctor will also decide whether to inject a local anaesthetic, a pain killer, at the same time. The anaesthetic does not reduce inflammation but will allow almost immediate, temporary pain relief.

HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE MY JOINTS FEEL BETTER?

The local anaesthetic will start to reduce your pain within a few minutes of the injection, and this will last for 1-2 hours. The steroid will take longer to start working; sometimes it can be nearly 1-2 days after the injection before you start to feel better. While you wait for the steroid to work you can take painkillers such as paracetamol, or cold packs.

The joint you have had injected will hopefully feel better for up to 3 months and sometimes longer, however everybody is different so it may not last this long.

CAN I LEAVE THE SURGERY STRAIGHT AFTER THE INJECTION?

Yes—you should be able to leave after your injection, as long as you feel well enough. Very rarely people can have a reaction to the drugs. If a reaction occurs, you may get a rash on your skin, feel your face swelling up or feel you can't breathe properly. If this does happen, we will be able to treat you immediately. If you feel any of these symptoms later on at home you should go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department.

Please remember: this is very unlikely to happen.

DO I NEED TO REST AFTER THE INJECTION?

It is recommended to rest the joint for 48 hours. This will help the injection work better. If this isn't possible then it is advised you avoid any strenuous exercise for the following 48 hours. It will be appropriate to move the joint as normal but do not lift or push heavy objects for a week after you injection.

DIABETES AND STEROID INJECTIONS

We advise, that if you are a diabetic who checks their own blood sugars, you will need to do so more often in the week after your injection. If you have any concerns, please contact your diabetes specialist for advice if your blood sugar is high.

BIOLOGIC THERAPIES

If you are taking an anti-TNF therapy, or other biologic therapies we will still be able to inject your joints. You must be especially quick to tell us if you have any signs of infection in your joint.

RISKS & SIDE-EFFECTS

Side effects are rare, but very occasionally people notice increased joint pain within the first 24 hours. However, this will usually settle within a couple of days.

The most important but very rare side effect of treatment is infection to the joint. If your joint feels like it is getting more painful and swollen, or if you have a high temperature and your joint becomes:

Hot **Red**
Swollen **Painful**

then you should contact us directly, or call NHS 111 if it is Out of Hours.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS

- Some patients experience facial flushing after an injection or itching at the injection site, but these should settle within the first few days.
- Occasionally you may see some thinning or discoloration of the skin at the site of the injection. This is called de-pigmentation and may take longer to fade.
- Women may have some changes in their normal menstrual cycle. This is more likely if you have more than one joint injected. If it lasts longer than one cycle you should see your usual doctor.

If you have any reactions that you are concerned about you should contact us. You could alternatively, contact NHS Direct for advice.

HOW OFTEN CAN I HAVE MY JOINTS INJECTED?

The most we will give you in the same joint is 4 in a year. Very occasionally we will give you more than this if there are special reasons. However, there is a small risk of frequent injections causing cartilage damage, especially in weight bearing joints. Your Doctor will be advise you more specifically about this.

OTHER MEDICATION AND STEROID INJECTIONS

You may take other medications with steroid injections. If you are taking an anticoagulant (blood thinner) such as Warfarin, you should arrange a repeat INR 3 days after the injection.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like any further information about steroid injections, or if you have any concerns about your treatment, please discuss this with your Doctor.

Alternatively you can visit www.nhs.uk and search for 'Joint Injections' or contact NHS 111 for advice and guidance.