

Cortisone Injection

Patient Information

What is cortisone?

Cortisone is the name used to describe a group of drugs commonly known as corticosteroids. Cortisone is used to treat pain in various parts of the body where inflammation is felt to be the cause of this pain. The reason why cortisone is effective in treating such pain is because it is a powerful anti-inflammatory. Cortisone is NOT an illegal steroid medication, such as those steroids used by some disqualified body builders and athletes

Why do we inject cortisone?

Cortisone is very effective in reducing inflammation in the body e.g. tendonitis, bursitis and arthritis.

By doing so, it reduces pain in the area.

Sometimes we may inject cortisone to help identify the underlying source of your pain (by elimination). This will help your doctor or physiotherapist tailor a treatment for you.

What does the procedure involve?

The skin is prepared using an antiseptic agent. Our Radiologist will then use an ultrasound probe to guide the needle into the perfect position. The effectiveness of the procedure depends on getting the cortisone in precisely the right area (within millimetres).

The degree of discomfort during the procedure is generally mild as the needle used is fine and local anaesthetic is mixed in with cortisone. Our doctors use a combination of local anaesthetic and cortisone to minimise any pain. However, the cortisone injection may still cause pain, depending on the area being treated.

The local anaesthetic lasts 2-4 hours. Once this wears off the area may feel sore for a few days. Panadol and ice will help if you need them

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How well does it work?

Approximately 70% of people benefit significantly from a cortisone injection.

Sometimes the benefit lasts weeks, sometimes months and sometimes forever. You may need to repeat the injection at a later date.

The cortisone should start taking effect within 2-3 days, and the full benefit gained in 1-2 weeks.

As for all medical procedures, there are risks and benefits associated with the administration of any medication, including cortisone. The chances of cortisone providing you with the benefit of pain relief in most patients outweighs the risk of experiencing a side effect. The decision to inject cortisone is not taken lightly and is carefully made by your referring doctor and based on your signs, symptoms and past medical history, as well as the suspected diagnosis.