

Steroid Injection FAQs

What did I receive?

Cortisone is naturally produced by the body during times of stress. A synthetic version can be used to help reduce inflammation, pain, and swelling in joints, muscles, and soft tissue. This injection is mixed with lidocaine, a local anesthetic, to ease some of the injection pain.

How long will the injection take to work?

It can take from a few days up to 1-2 weeks for effects to take place. The effects can last anywhere from 1-3 months.

Is the injection painful?

Conducted by a professional, pain is minimal and is equivalent to any other injection. The procedure lasts 5 seconds and is only one needlestick in the affected area.

Is the injection painful afterward?

There can be increased pain at the injection site up to 48 hours after the procedure in a phenomenon called "cortisone flare" when the cortisone crystallized within the tissue. If this occurs, it can be treated simply with topical ice and over-the-counter painkillers.

Will I be able to drive after the injection?

Yes, you will be able to drive yourself. If you are feeling faint or dizzy, please refrain from driving and let your healthcare provider know.

What are some common side effects of the injection?

The most common side effect is pain at the injection site. Short-term numbness and tingling, particularly in the fingers, can occur in the first few hours due to the use of lidocaine in the injection. Occasionally facial flushing can occur and there is a small risk of skin discoloration at the injection site.

What are some worrisome side effects from the injection?

As with any injection, there is a risk of infection. If you notice increased redness, heat, hardening over the area, discharge from the area, fevers, and chills, please let your healthcare provider know immediately. There is a rare risk of tendon, nerve, and blood vessel injury near the injection site.

Will the injection affect my blood sugar?

It is possible to see blood sugar levels rise a few days after the injection, so be sure to monitor your blood sugar levels and let your healthcare provider know accordingly.

When can I receive another injection?

You may receive an injection every 3 months at the earliest. There is no limit to the number of joint injections you can receive, whereas we try to limit tendon injections to 2 rounds.