

# Your ultrasound scan. Ultrasound guided steroid injections and musculo-skeletal (MSK) interventional procedures

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This leaflet is designed to answer some of the questions you may have about your forthcoming ultrasound examination. Whilst we endeavour to scan every patient at their allocated time, some scans may take longer than expected which can unfortunately result in a delay. If, after reading this, you still have any worries or queries, please telephone the diagnostic imaging department appointments office on (01493) 452456 between 8:30am – 5pm Monday – Friday.

## What is an ultrasound examination?

Ultrasound is a safe and painless method of examining parts of the body using high frequency sound waves, which produce a picture on the screen.

## What is a steroid injection?

The purpose of the injection is to reduce pain and inflammation in the affected joints or soft tissues. Cortisone injections are often injected along with a local anaesthetic into a painful joint but may also be used to treat inflammation in soft tissues like tendons or the plantar fascia in the foot.

## How do I prepare for my injection?

There is no specific preparation for the injection however please inform the radiologist or sonographer if you are on any of the following drugs:

- Warfarin
- Asprin
- Clopidogrel (Plavix)
- Zyban (Bupropian)

Please inform the radiologist or sonographer if you are diabetic as the steroid injection may temporarily affect your sugar levels.

## You should not have the injection carried out if

- You have an infection
- You are allergic to local anaesthetic or steroids
- You feel very unwell
- You are due to have surgery in that area soon
- You are pregnant or breast feeding
- You have poorly controlled diabetes



## How is the examination performed?

When you check in at the X-ray department reception you will be directed to the Ultrasound waiting area. You may be asked to change into a hospital gown by an ultrasound support worker, who will also act as a chaperone during your scan. If your hair is long please wear it up off your shoulders.

Your scan may be carried out by either a sonographer or a consultant radiologist (a doctor who specialises in diagnostic imaging).

Ultrasound gel will be applied to your skin and is easily wiped off at the end of your examination. This gel is water soluble and will not cause harm to your skin or clothing. The lights will be dimmed so the ultrasound screen can be seen more easily. Whilst you are either sitting or laying on a couch the ultrasound probe will be scanned across the skin surface of the area of interest. Your skin will then be cleaned with a sterile solution. Local anaesthetic may be injected at the time as the steroid, which will provide short term pain relief. There may be more than one injection depending on the area being treated.

The whole procedure should last between 15-30 minutes.

## Following your injection

Depending on the procedure, either the radiologist or sonographer may ask you to rest for approximately 30 minutes before leaving the hospital. It is also advised that you rest the remainder of the day at home.

If local anaesthetic has been injected you may not feel any pain for a few hours afterwards. Once the local anaesthetic wears off you may feel increased pain for a few days. Bleeding or bruising may occur at the injection site.

Normal activities can be resumed the following day. However in certain situations you are advised not to do any strenuous exercise for a week. More specific instructions will be given to you after your procedure.

We advise you not to drive on the day of the treatment and to make alternative arrangements. The beneficial effect of a corticosteroid may not be apparent until 24-48 hours after your injection.

## Possible side effects

All drugs can cause side effects. The following occur very rarely with corticosteroid injections

- Facial flushing; This occurs 24-48 hours after the injection. You may feel hot and your face may look flushed. This resolves completely and does not require treatment.
- Glycaemic control; If you are diabetic you may notice a slight change in your blood sugar level over the following five days. It is advisable to check this.
- Joint or soft tissue infection; This occurs very rarely. If the area becomes hot and painful seek immediate medical advice from your GP.
- Post injection flare; Occasionally your symptoms may be exacerbated by the injection. This will last for 24-48 hours and should be treated with painkillers as required.
- Depigmentation; In rare cases a slight thinning of the skin or a small patch of scarring is evident over the injection site. This is rare and usually occurs in superficial soft tissue injections i.e the hands and feet.

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This leaflet was produced by the Ultrasound Department as a service to patients.

### Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### Trust Values

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courtesy and respect</li><li>• A welcoming and positive attitude</li><li>• Polite, friendly and interested in people</li><li>• Value and respect people as individuals</li></ul> <p>So people feel <b>welcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attentively kind and helpful</li><li>• Look out for dignity, privacy &amp; humanity</li><li>• Attentive, responsive &amp; take time to help</li><li>• Visible presence of staff to provide care</li></ul> <p>So people feel <b>cared for</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsive communication</li><li>• Listen to people &amp; answer their questions</li><li>• Keep people clearly informed</li><li>• Involve people</li></ul> <p>So people feel <b>in control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective and professional</li><li>• Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring</li><li>• Effective care / services from joined up teams</li><li>• Organised and timely, looking to improve</li></ul> <p>So people feel <b>safe</b></p> |
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The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**