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## **Introduction**

Your physiotherapist thinks an injection might help you. They have referred you to a specialist physiotherapist for an opinion. This leaflet gives you information about the procedure to help you decide. If you have questions, ask your physiotherapist at your next visit. The physiotherapist might talk about using corticosteroids, local anaesthetic, or both. This leaflet adds to the advice from your physiotherapist.

### **What are Corticosteroids?**

Steroid injections treat joint and soft tissue problems. Corticosteroids are strong anti-inflammatories. They help reduce inflammation and pain. This can help you start rehabilitation sooner, need fewer treatments, and return to normal activities faster.

### **What is local Anaesthetic?**

Local anaesthetic is a medicine that numbs an area for a short time. It can be mixed with corticosteroids or used alone to help diagnose conditions.

### **How many injections will I need?**

It depends on your condition and how you respond. Your physiotherapist will advise you.

### **What should I do after the injection?**

Rest the injected area for 1-2 days. You can move it but do not overuse it. Avoid tasks that caused pain before. This helps the drug work and prevents injury. Overusing the joint can make the injection less effective.

### **What if I am Diabetic?**

Your physiotherapist will check your HbA1c. If it's above 69 mmol/mol, you can't have the injection within physiotherapy. Your blood sugar may change for a short time after the injection. Ask your diabetic nurse or GP if you need help managing this.

## **What if I am taking blood thinners?**

Tell your physiotherapist which blood thinners you take. Some may need to be stopped before the injection. Your physiotherapist will give you specific advice.

## **What if I am unwell on the day of the planned injection?**

If you feel unwell or are on antibiotics, reschedule the appointment. Contact us to cancel if needed.

## **What if I have had any other injections?**

If you had a Covid/flu vaccine in the last 2 weeks, reschedule the appointment.

## **Are there any side effects from this treatment?**

The risk of complications from a steroid injection is low. Serious complications are very rare. Your physiotherapist will give you more advice before the injection. Sometimes the following may happen.

### **Pain Flare**

Sometimes joint pain flares up in the first 24-48 hours after an injection. It usually settles on its own in a few days.

### **Infection**

We use aseptic techniques, but very rarely an infection can occur. If you get heat, swelling, or worsening symptoms at the injection site, especially with fever, see your doctor or go to A&E.

### **Allergic Reaction**

Allergic reactions to the injection are very rare. If it happens, it usually occurs in the first 20 minutes. We ask you to stay in the physiotherapy department for this time. If you have any unexpected reaction, seek medical advice.

### **Skin Discolouration**

Slight skin discolouration around the injection site can occur, more common in darker skin.

## **Fat Atrophy**

This looks like a dip in the skin and should resolve on its own in 1-2 years.

## **Effect on joints**

Repeated intra-articular steroid injections has been shown to potentially contribute to the acceleration of degenerative change to the cartilage in joints.

## **Other temporary side effects which may be noted include:**

Other temporary side effects may include menstrual disturbance, facial flushing, and acne in those prone to it.

If you have any concerns, discuss them with your physiotherapist

**This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**