

A person is running a dog in a park at sunset. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and grey sneakers. The dog is a small, white, fluffy breed. The background is a blurred park with trees and grass, illuminated by the warm light of the setting sun.

PRIME
health

Having an
Ultrasound
Guided Injection
with Prime Health

Keep you healthy

Having a **Ultrasound Guided Injection** with Prime Health

We hope the information in this leaflet will explain what is involved when having an ultrasound guided injection.

Although it is full of useful information, the leaflet is not designed to replace an informed discussion with your own clinician before your appointment.

However, we will be able to answer any questions or concerns about your scan when you arrive for your appointment.

All our facilities are wheelchair friendly.

What is an ultrasound guided injection?

An injection is given to reduce inflammation and pain within a joint. They are frequently recommended for people with rheumatoid arthritis and other types of inflammatory arthritis including gout and pseudo gout. They may also be recommended for osteoarthritis if your joints are very painful or if you need pain relief in addition to your normal medication.

Ultrasound is a type of imaging that uses high-frequency sound waves. The ultrasound probe detects sound waves that are bounced back from different structures in the body, producing an image on a monitor. An ultrasound scan can detect needles inserted into the body and therefore can be used target your injection and to exactly the right spot.

An injection into a joint is called an intra-articular injection, and it can be made up of a corticosteroid combined with a local anaesthetic to reduce your discomfort. It can be directed into or around the joint to reduce swelling (inflammation), stiffness and pain.

If you have pain or inflammation near an affected joint, you will probably be given an injection into this tender area rather than the joint. This is called a periarticular or soft tissue injection.

What are steroids?

Steroids are a type of medicine, which can be given as tablets or injections. Steroid injections come in different formulas; some act very quickly others are slower acting but longer lasting.

What do steroid injections do?

They reduce inflammation, which helps to ease pain and reduce stiffness

What are they used for?

They're used for any inflammatory arthritis and sometimes for severe osteoarthritis, for gout and other inflammatory joint conditions and for conditions affecting the muscles, tendons and other soft tissues.

How effective is an ultrasound guided injection?

Ultrasound guided injections can be beneficial to reduce localised pain. They won't cure the underlying cause, but they may help improve your symptoms for up to several months. With less pain, you may find you can do more physical activity, helping the joint to feel more comfortable. This can improve sleep and make everyday activities easier to manage. Some people find that they can reduce or stop taking painkillers after consultation with their GP.

Along with physiotherapy, injections can sometimes help avoid the need for surgery.

Some people gain immediate pain relief; others may not notice anything for a couple of weeks after the injection. And the results vary from person to person – it does not work for everyone.

Are there any risks or side-effects from the injection?

Yes.

Side-effects can include:

bruising at the injection site

Rare side effects include:

- A temporary flare-up of your joint pain
- Hot flushes or mood swings
- Feeling feverish, tired and sick
- Headaches
- Allergic reaction to local anaesthetic

Injections can occasionally cause some skin thinning or changes to skin colour at the injection site. While the procedure is always performed under sterile conditions, as with all procedures, there is a small risk of infection. All these are rare events (they are known to affect between 1 in every 1000 and 1 in every 10,000 people). If the area injected becomes red, hot and swollen, and/or you feel feverish, it is important to seek medical advice immediately.

Once the numbing effect of the local anaesthetic wears off, the area can sometimes feel tender for up to 48 hours before the corticosteroid starts to work. This affects about 1 in every 10 people. Occasionally the pain can be quite bad, but that doesn't mean the injection hasn't worked.

If you are diabetic, your blood glucose levels may increase temporarily. (Please see 'When you arrive')

Do I need to prepare or do anything differently before my appointment?

You may find it is useful to wear loose clothing or clothing that can either be easily removed or rolled-up to expose the treatment area.

If you are on Warfarin or any other blood thinning tablets, make a note of your INR (International Normalising Ratio). This should be stable at 3 or below.

When you arrive

Please follow the arrival instructions as set out in your appointment confirmation letter.

You will be asked to complete a health questionnaire prior to the procedure, which will be checked with the clinician undertaking the procedure who will be a Radiologist or Specialist Doctor.

Please ensure you advise the Radiologist or Sonographer if you are:

- Taking any of the following medication:
 - Warfarin
 - Aspirin
 - Clopidogrel (Plavix)
 - Zyan (Bupropion)
- A diabetic as the steroid may temporarily affect your sugar levels for about 24 hours after the injection, so you will need to carefully monitor your levels of blood glucose and adjust your medication if necessary. If you have haemophilia (meaning your blood does not clot), there could be an increased risk of bleeding into the joint.
- If you have an infection, have recently tested positive for MRSA or been prescribed antibiotics.
- If you're pregnant or think you could be.

The procedure will be explained to you, including any risks and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions. You will then be asked for consent to continue with the procedure.

For more information about Informed Consent please visit: [nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/)

What happens during the scan?

- The procedure will be performed by a clinician trained in performing ultrasound guided procedures.
- The clinician will explain the benefits and risks of having the injection and will answer any questions you may have
- You will be positioned on the ultrasound couch. The clinician will perform an ultrasound to identify the area requiring an injection. The skin is cleaned with a sterile solution.
- The procedure is performed under aseptic conditions to reduce the risk of infection.
- A small needle will be inserted into the site of the pain under ultrasound image guidance. A local anaesthetic will first be injected followed by the steroid injection.
- The needle is removed and a plaster or dressing is applied.

How long does it take?

The procedure takes around 15 minutes. Your appointment may take around 30 minutes in total, depending on how you are feeling afterwards.

Will I feel any pain?

The injection will involve a small needle and will be similar to a blood test. If the area is very inflamed there may be more discomfort and you should tell the clinician if you are finding the pain difficult to tolerate.

The injection may cause stinging briefly before the area becomes numb. There may be a pressure sensation or tightness for injections into joints.

What happens after the procedure?

Immediately after steroid injection, you may feel that your pain has gone or is significantly reduced. This is due to the local anaesthetic and the effect will last for a few hours. The steroid usually starts to work in three to four days but may take longer. The effect of the steroid injection varies from person to person, and a few people may not experience any benefit.

Symptoms can be relieved for a few weeks to a few months. You will be required to remain in the department for 10 minutes after the procedure. We strongly recommend that you are accompanied to the department by a responsible adult and advise that you refrain from driving for the remainder of the day. Your insurance may be void if you are involved in an accident. You should rest the area that has been injected for 1-2 days.

Can I bring a relative/friend?

Yes, subject to any infection control restrictions. However, your relative/friend may be asked to leave the ultrasound room during the procedure.

Can I eat and drink afterwards?

Yes, you are able to eat and drink as normal, although some people may feel nauseous for a while after their treatment.

Do local steroid injections affect fertility or pregnancy?

Single steroid injections should not affect your fertility or pregnancy. However, if you are pregnant or think you could be you should let the clinician know before you have a steroid injection.

Can it affect breastfeeding?

Although small amounts of steroid may pass into the breast milk, this is very unlikely to be harmful to your baby. However, you should discuss the risks with your clinician before your treatment.

Will it affect vaccinations?

- You are advised to delay a local steroid injection for a minimum of 2 weeks following a COVID vaccination.
- You are advised to delay a COVID 19 vaccination for a minimum of 2 weeks following a local steroid injection.
- Other vaccinations may be administered as usual after local steroid injections.

Other sources of information

NHS: nhs.uk/conditions/steroid-injections/

Patient: patient.info/treatment-medication/steroids/steroid-injections

Versus Arthritis: versusarthritis.org

Arthritis Foundation (US): arthritis.org/drug-guide/corticosteroids/corticosteroids

Finally...

We hope we have provided all you need to know about your procedure, but do please let us know if you have any further questions. You must understand what is involved before you sign the patient questionnaire and consent form.

Legal notice

This leaflet is intended only as general information. It should not replace advice from your own medical professional and Prime Health cannot accept any legal liability arising from its use.

We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be aware that it can be subject to change.

Please discuss any specific advice about the investigation or any concerns you may have, with your referring clinician.

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

At Prime Health it is important to us that we give our patients the best care possible. Please contact us to let us know your views and experiences of using our services.

We are committed to improving what we do and how we do it and your feedback is particularly important. Following your appointment we will send you a questionnaire inviting you to provide feedback on your experience.

The Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk) also likes to hear feedback from patients as it helps them to decide when, where and what services to inspect.

Any concerns and complaints from patients or their representatives will be investigated thoroughly.

If you are unhappy with the service or care we are providing, please tell a member of staff whilst at your appointment.

If you are still not satisfied, please contact our Governance Team:

By email:

governance@medicalimaging.org.uk

By post:

Governance Team,
Prime Health
Unit 7, The Pavilions,
Brighton Road, Pease Pottage,
Crawley, West Sussex,
RH11 9BJ

UGSIPIL-PH v1.0 JUN21 © 2021 Prime Health

Prime Health

Surrey | Harley Street | Manchester

Tel: 03300 252 100 prime-health.co.uk

Company Registration Number: 07199371 England