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Providing care together in York,  
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# Corticosteroid Injection Therapy

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

Caring with pride

### Why have an Injection?

A corticosteroid injection is given to reduce inflammation and pain. The pain relief may be temporary or permanent. Sometimes better long term outcomes are achieved by combining injection therapy with physiotherapy.

### What is in the Injection?

The injection is a corticosteroid. Corticosteroids are drugs used to relieve inflammation. They work by blocking the effects of certain chemicals that the immune system uses to "kick-start" the process of inflammation.

Your injection may also include local anaesthetic or saline.

### How fast does it work?

It can take between 2 and 7 days for the injection to start working

### You should not have the injection if you:

Have an infection, feel unwell or are taking antibiotics.  
Are allergic to anaesthetic or steroid.  
Due surgery in the same body part.

Have had live vaccines within the last 4 weeks (MMR, polio, yellow fever) or flu jab in the last 10 days.

Are taking oral antifungal medication.

Are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Are under 18.

Do not want the injection.

### What are the side effects?

- **Symptom flare** (1:25) Increased pain and or lethargy within the first 24 hours of the injection. This usually settles within 2 – 7 days.
- **Facial flushing** (1:100). These symptoms should settle within 4 weeks.
- **Skin changes** – very occasionally some thinning or discoloration of the skin may occur at the injection site with loss of some of the fat tissue under the skin. This is often temporary and the skin may recover over the course of a year. In some cases these changes are permanent.
- **Menstrual disturbance / breakthrough bleeding** -Women may have some changes in their normal cycle after an injection. If it lasts longer than one cycle you should see your doctor.

- **Diabetic patients** may notice a temporary increase in blood sugar levels. Contact your diabetes specialist for advice if your blood sugar is high
- **Disturbance to INR**- if you are on Warfarin you should make arrangements for your INR to be checked 48-72 hours after the injection.

### What are the risks?

- **Infection**- there is a very small risk of infection with a recorded rate of 1:40,000. If the area injected becomes red, hot and swollen and you feel unwell please attend the Emergency department of your local hospital with this leaflet.
- **Allergic reaction**- extremely rare, occurs within 15 minutes of the injection.

### Do I need to rest afterwards?

It is recommended to reduce your normal day to day activities if these involve heavy lifting for the upper limb or impact activities for the lower limb. You will be provided with specific advice following your injection.