

Information on Ultrasound-guided Steroid injections for joints/ soft tissues

What is a steroid injection and why should I have a steroid injection?

A steroid/corticosteroid (or 'cortisone') is an anti-inflammatory medicine, which can be injected directly into or around the tissues that are causing your symptoms. A steroid injection can help to relieve swelling, pain and stiffness caused by inflammation. By reducing your symptoms, it will help you to start your rehabilitation sooner.

What are the risks of steroid injections?

Steroid injections are very safe and are performed in their millions around the world. There are some possible side effects, with serious side effects being rare. Possible side effects include:

- Infection: The risk is between 1 in 5,000 and 10,000. Every precaution is taken to minimise this risk, however if this does occur it is a serious complication and can require surgery and prolonged antibiotic treatment. If the area injected becomes hot, swollen and much more painful for more than 24 hours after your injection, or if you feel generally unwell, contact your GP or Emergency Department (ED).
- Steroid flare: Some experience a temporary increase in pain 24-48 hours after an injection.
- Temporary suppression of immune system: there is a theoretical risk of immunosuppression for 2 weeks after a steroid injection.
- Allergic reaction.
- Flushing of the face: This can occur for up to 48 hours after an injection.
- Fat necrosis: Dimpling, fat loss or change in skin colour around the injection site can occur.
- Temporary bruising or bleeding.
- Slight vaginal bleeding/menstrual irregularities.
- Irregular blood glucose levels.
- Failure to relieve symptoms.

What medical conditions should I inform the Radiology team about before an injection?

Contact us on **028 950 42869** as soon as possible if:

- On blood thinning medicines such as clopidogrel, warfarin or apixaban (aspirin can continue as normal)
- Currently unwell or think you have coronavirus
- On antibiotics or have an immunisation or vaccination planned close to your appointment
- Severe or serious allergies
- If pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have HIV as certain medications can interact with steroid

Are there any other alternatives?

Benefits and alternatives should be discussed prior to your appointment with your referring doctor, nurse or physiotherapist caring for you. If you do not want to be considered for a steroid injection, please let us know prior to your appointment.

Do I need to prepare for the injection?

Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment and allow at least 1 hour for your appointment. You must not drive after an injection; therefore, a lift is advised. We advise patients are picked up and dropped by someone to their appointment.

What happens during the appointment/ my injection?

If you have also been referred for an ultrasound scan, this will take place before an injection is considered and the findings discussed with you. Sometimes this will show a reason not to perform an injection. If appropriate to perform an injection, a Radiologist (a doctor who specialises in imaging and image guided injections) will check you have read this information leaflet, answer any specific questions, and ask for your consent. Remember, it is your decision. You can change your mind at any time and your wishes will be respected. Not having the examination, however, may delay your treatment.

Once you are positioned, your skin is cleaned with antiseptic. Using ultrasound, a small needle is accurately positioned into the affected area and the steroid injection is given. The procedure time is usually 30-40 minutes.

The injection should not be painful. A Consultant, a senior Radiology doctor or a Radiology doctor in training supervised by a Consultant, will be performing your injection.

What happens after the injection?

The local anaesthetic works for 8 -12 hours, and the steroid usually starts to work after 4–5 days. Effects of injections vary, but a good result is 6-12 months of reduced symptoms.

The days the injection, it is advised:

- Not to drive for the next 12 hours after your injection.
- To only perform light activities for the next 48 hours, then return to more normal activities.
- Not to bath or go swimming; showering is fine.
- If you have any concern about infection and the area become hot, red, painful or has excessive bruising you should contact your GP or ED.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

An electronic report from the Radiologist will be sent the team who referred you. If you had planned follow up with your referring team for after your injection and have not heard anything from them a few weeks after your injection, it is worth contacting their appointment team.

Image sharing

Your images will be electronically stored on the hospital radiological information system, which can be accessed throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and other NHS Trusts by doctors and health care professionals. The ability to share images and radiological reports will improve the safety and quality of your care by ensuring that the right information is available in the right place at the right time. In order to improve the medical services we provide we may also use your data as anonymously as possible for internal audit and medical education. If your data is to be used for research, then a separate consent process will be used. You will be asked for your consent should this be the case.

Contact us

If you have any queries, we will be happy to answer any questions on the day of your scan or you can contact us on the number given on your appointment letter.

Feedback

We hope you found the information in this leaflet helpful. If it did not tell you what you needed to know or you would like to provide any feedback on your experience please let us know so that we can make any necessary improvements.

You can provide feedback on your experience:

Telephone: **028 9504 8000** (Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm)

Textphone: **18001 028 950 48000**

By email: compliments@belfasttrust.hscni.net

By email: complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net

By completing an online form: <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/contact/FeedbackForm.htm>

Care Opinion



We invite you to share your experience by clicking the following link:
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/>

or by scanning the following QR code on your smartphone or tablet:



Language and accessible support services –

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

If a Sign Language interpreter is required, please either telephone **028 9615 8900** via the Sign Video remote interpreting service (<https://signvideo.co.uk/deaf-community/>) or email us at MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net and we will arrange one for your appointment. Please

have your H&C number ready when calling or include it in your email. This can be found at the top right corner of any Health and Social Care letters you may have received.

If you are unable to hear on the phone and need to contact us with regards to your appointment you can email us at MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net.

Do you need this information in another format or language?

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, including Braille, large print, CD, audio tape please contact the telephone number **028 9615 8900** or e-mail address MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net, and we will do our best to meet your needs.

Polish - Czy potrzebujesz tych informacji w innym formacie lub języku?

Fundusz ma dostęp do usług w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych. Jeśli potrzebujesz tych informacji w innym języku lub formacie, w tym w piśmie Braille'a, dużym druku, na płycie CD, kasecie magnetofonowej, skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem telefonu lub adresem e-mail **028 9615 8900 / MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net**, a my dołożymy wszelkich starań, aby spełnić Twoje potrzeby.

Arabic - هل تحتاج هذه المعلومات بصيغة أو بلغة أخرى؟

تستطيع الجمعية توفير خدمات الترجمة الفورية والتحريرية. إذا احتجت هذه المعلومات بلغة أو بصيغة أخرى، بما فيها صيغة برايل **Braille** أو صيغة بالأحرف الكبيرة، أو في سي دي **CD** أو في شريط مسموع، يُرجى الاتصال برقم التليفون أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني **MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net / 028 9615 8900**، وسوف نبذل قصارى جهدنا في تلبية احتياجاتك.

Lithuanian - Ar jums reikia šios informacijos kitu formatu ar kalba?

Tarnyba gali suteikti vertimo žodžiu ir raštu paslaugas. Jei reikia šios informacijos kita kalba ar formatu, įskaitant Brailio raštą, didelį šriftą, kompaktinį diską, garso įrašą, skambinkite telefonu arba susisiekite el. paštu [MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net / 028 9615 8900](mailto:MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net) ir mes padarysime viską, kad patenkintume jūsų poreikius.

Romanian - Aveți nevoie de aceste informații într-un alt format sau altă limbă?

Trustul are acces la servicii de interpretariat și traducere. Dacă aveți nevoie de aceste informații într-o altă limbă sau într-un alt format, inclusiv Braille, tipărire cu caractere de mari dimensiuni, CD, înregistrare audio, atunci vă rugăm să ne contactați la numărul de telefon sau la adresa de e-mail [MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net / 028 9615 8900](mailto:MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net), iar noi vom face tot posibilul pentru satisfacerea necesităților dumneavoastră.

Tetum - Ita presiza atu informasaun ida ne'e iha formatu ka lian seluk ka lae?

Fidusiáriu ida ne'e iha asesu ba servisu durubasa no tradusaun. Se Ita presiza informasaun ida ne'e iha lian ka formatu seluk, inklui letra Braille, letra boot, CD, kasete audio, entaun favór telefone númeru ka enderesu e-mail [MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net / 028 9615 8900](mailto:MPHAdminFOH@belfasttrust.hscni.net), no ami sei halo esforsu tomak atu kumpre Ita-nia nesesidade sira.