The Danebury Practice

# JOINT INJECTION AFTERCARE GUIDANCE

**Corticosteroid ± Local Anaesthetic**

Thank you for attending The Danebury Practice for your joint injection.

You have been given an injection containing a corticosteroid, with or without local anaesthetic, into or around the affected joint or soft tissue.

The purpose of the injection is to reduce inflammation and pain and, where appropriate, improve movement and function.

Please read the following information carefully following your treatment.

## Immediately after your injection

You may experience:

- Mild soreness or tenderness at the injection site.
- A small amount of bruising.
- Temporary numbness or altered sensation if local anaesthetic was used.
- Temporary improvement in pain from the local anaesthetic.
- A temporary increase in pain once the local anaesthetic wears off.

If local anaesthetic has been used, the treated area may remain numb for several hours. **Take particular care not to injure the area while it is numb.**

If you have been advised not to drive following your injection, please arrange alternative transport.

## Rest and activity

For the first **24–48 hours**:

- Rest the injected joint.
- Avoid strenuous exercise.
- Avoid heavy lifting.
- Avoid repetitive or high-impact activity involving the treated joint.
- Avoid activities that significantly increase your pain.

Gentle movement is encouraged where comfortable, as prolonged complete rest can result in stiffness.

After the initial recovery period, gradually return to your usual activities as your symptoms allow.

**Your practitioner may recommend a longer period of reduced activity depending on the joint treated, the reason for the injection and whether a tendon or other soft tissue has been treated. Please follow the individual advice given to you.**

**What should I expect?**

It is common for the injection site to feel sore for a few days.

You may also experience a temporary **steroid flare**, where pain and inflammation increase following the injection. This can occur within the first 24 hours and usually settles within a few days.

The steroid does not necessarily provide immediate pain relief. Depending on the steroid preparation and the condition being treated, improvement may begin over the following few days and can take longer.

If local anaesthetic was used, you may initially feel significantly better because of the anaesthetic. This effect is temporary and may wear off before the steroid begins to take effect.

**Managing discomfort**

If appropriate for you, you may take your usual simple pain relief, such as paracetamol.

Follow the dosing instructions on the packaging or those provided by your clinician.

A cool pack may be applied to the area for short periods if this helps with discomfort or swelling.

**Do not apply ice directly to the skin.**

If you have been advised to use a particular medication or treatment following your injection, follow the instructions provided by your practitioner.

**Injection site care**

Keep the injection site clean and dry following the procedure.

A small dressing or plaster can usually be removed according to the instructions given by your practitioner.

Avoid unnecessary touching, rubbing or pressure over the injection site.

A small amount of bruising or tenderness is normal.

**If you have diabetes**

Corticosteroid injections can temporarily increase blood glucose levels.

If you have diabetes, monitor your blood glucose more closely following your injection and follow the specific monitoring advice provided by your clinician.

If your blood glucose becomes significantly elevated or you are concerned about your diabetic control, contact your usual diabetes team or GP for advice.

**Other possible effects**

Although uncommon, corticosteroid injections can occasionally cause:

- Facial flushing.
- Temporary changes in blood glucose.
- Temporary changes to the menstrual cycle.
- Temporary mood changes.
- Skin thinning or a change in skin colour around the injection site, particularly following repeated injections.

These effects are generally temporary, although some local skin changes can persist.

**When should I contact The Danebury Practice?**

Please contact us promptly if:

- Pain is becoming progressively worse rather than improving.
- The injected area becomes increasingly hot, red or swollen.
- You develop increasing tenderness around the joint or injection site.
- You develop a fever or feel generally unwell.
- There is discharge or pus from the injection site.
- You develop significant or unexpected swelling.
- You develop persistent or worsening numbness or weakness.
- You are concerned that you may have developed an infection.

**Infection following a joint injection is uncommon but potentially serious.** A joint or injection site that becomes increasingly hot, swollen and painful, particularly when accompanied by fever or feeling unwell, requires urgent medical assessment.

If you cannot contact the practice and you are concerned about a possible infection, seek urgent medical advice through **NHS 111 or an urgent GP assessment**.

If you are severely unwell, call **999** or attend your nearest Emergency Department.

**Seek emergency medical attention**

Call **999** immediately if you develop symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, including:

- Difficulty breathing.

- Swelling of the lips, mouth, tongue or throat.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Widespread raised or itchy rash.
- Sudden severe dizziness or collapse.

Serious allergic reactions are very uncommon but require immediate treatment.

**Your recovery**

The aim of the injection is to help reduce pain and inflammation and enable you to move more comfortably.

Once the initial recovery period has passed, gradually increase your activity.

If you have been given specific exercises by your clinician or physiotherapist, continue these as advised. Rehabilitation and appropriate exercise remain important in the longer-term management of many joint conditions.

**Important**

This information is intended as general aftercare guidance. Your practitioner may give you additional or different instructions depending on the joint treated, your diagnosis, the medication used and your individual circumstances.

If you are unsure about anything following your injection, please contact **The Danebury Practice** for advice.

**The Danebury Practice**
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