



Cortisone Injections

Cortisone is an anti-inflammatory medication that can be injected into joints and soft tissues. Cortisone injections can be very effective for decreasing inflammation and reducing pain. The anti-inflammatory effect of the injection should begin to relieve symptoms within one week. Cortisone injections are not always successful and the benefit from the injection may be temporary.

When your symptoms have settled after a cortisone injection, it is very important to strengthen the surrounding muscles before you to return to physical activity.

The injection procedure is covered by Alberta Health Care, but the cost of the medication is not. We stock this medication in our office and you will be charged a nominal fee to cover the cost. A receipt will be provided in the event that this cost is covered by your supplementary/extended insurance plan.

RISKS OF CORTISONE INJECTIONS

Post-Injection Flare: This is a relatively uncommon reaction to a cortisone injection, occurring in only 1 in 100 people. Effects of a post-injection flare are very similar to an infection (pain, redness, warmth), except it starts in the first 24 hours after the injection. Post-injection flares typically last 2-3 days. Icing the area for up to 20 minutes at a time using an ice pack wrapped in a towel can be helpful; do not apply ice directly to your skin. Some patients also choose to take a pain reliever such as Tylenol® (acetaminophen) or an anti-inflammatory such as Aspirin® (acetylsalicylic acid) or Advil® (ibuprofen) to treat a post-injection flare. If the post-injection flare lasts longer than 5 days, make sure you notify your doctor.

Infection: The risk of infection is extremely low. Studies have shown the risk of infection after a cortisone injection is 1 in 10,000 injections. Signs of infection include fever, chills, and pain, warmth and redness around the area of the injection. Symptoms of an infection could occur up to 10 days after the injection. If you have any of these symptoms please call our office, or the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital, or go to the nearest urgent care or emergency clinic and tell them that you had a cortisone injection.

Weakening or Rupture of the Tendons: After an injection of cortisone close to a tendon, the tendons can be temporarily weakened and there is a risk of tendon rupture. Heavy lifting or intense sporting activities are not recommended for 10-14 days after an injection. Repeated cortisone injections close to tendons increases the chance of tendon rupture.

Allergic Reaction: You can have an allergic reaction to the cortisone preparation or local anaesthetic. If you have ever had any allergic reactions to cortisone or to local anaesthetics please tell your doctor prior to your injection.

Other Adverse Effects: Other potential short and long term adverse effects include but are not limited to: bleeding, facial flush, skin atrophy and pigment changes, nerve or blood vessel injury, increased blood sugar, as well as bone and immune system effects. Repeated cortisone injections into a joint may be harmful to articular cartilage and can cause osteoarthritis to progress.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor. If you have persistent swelling or pain, fever or chills, or if you notice a significant change in your well-being, please contact the clinic office at 403-760-2897, or the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital 403-762-2222 and ask to speak with an orthopedic surgeon.