

CORTISONE INJECTION

Cortisone or injectable steroid (not the same as anabolic steroid pills taken by athletes) is an anti-inflammatory agent. When it is injected into an area that is inflamed, the cortisone acts to reduce the inflammation and to reduce pain. Typical structures that become inflamed include joints and nerves, which can be helped with cortisone. However, tendons can become inflamed but should not be injected.

The cortisone only affects the area injected and does not disperse around your body. You can do your normal activities without restrictions after the shot.

The risks of a cortisone shot include possible infection: however the surface skin is cleaned thoroughly prior to the injection.

Following a cortisone shot, the area will typically be numb for 6-8 hours. This is due to the local anesthetic mixed in with the cortisone. You may feel a lump or fullness in the area, which is simply the volume of fluid that was injected. This should dissipate within the first 2-3 days.

Steroid Flare:

After the anesthesia wears off, it is not unusual for your pain and other symptoms to increase for 24-72 hours. This brief worsening of your pain is called **steroid flare**. It infrequently occurs after a cortisone shot, however, it may not happen at all. If it does occur and your discomfort increases, try to rest, apply ice to the area, and take over-the-counter pain medication, such as Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen), Aspirin, or Tylenol, if needed.

It takes approximately 72 hours for the cortisone to start working. If you are still having problems after several weeks, with no relief or possibly an increase in your original symptoms, please remember that another injection cannot be given until a **full 4 weeks** after the first.

Also remember that your pain may be fully, partially, or not at all relieved by the cortisone. Sometimes multiple injections at intervals of every month or more are needed for complete relief.