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Corticosteroid Information

General Information:

Cortisone or corticosteroid is a potent anti-inflammatory that belongs to the steroid family of drugs. Joint or soft tissue injections are used to treat various musculoskeletal conditions. The side effects of local corticosteroid injections can be less than seen with traditional anti-inflammatories (e.g. Advil, Naprosyn, Celebrex) taken by mouth.

If you are having an intra-articular hip injection done at the clinic you must have a driver to drive you home from your appointment. You cannot drive for 24 hours post injection. You must stay in the office for 20 minutes after the injection to monitor for side effects.

Procedure:

Generally, your physician will clean and anaesthetize "freeze" the area to be injected. Your doctor will inject the corticosteroid, often with an anaesthetizing agent such as lidocaine. You will feel some discomfort with the initial needle poke, but generally the procedure is well tolerated.

Adverse Effects:

1. Post injection flare of symptoms (2-10%)

Steroid crystals cause an increase of pain 6-12 hours after injection, lasting up to 72 hours. There is no fever. You can treat this symptom with ice packs and anti-inflammatories.

2. Infection (0.0001-0.072%)

This can present with increasing pain, fever/chills, redness around the area.

3. Facial flushing (<1%)

4. Skin atrophy or thinning, skin colour change (<1%)

5. Tendon rupture (<1%)

6. Bleeding (rare)

7. Nerve atrophy (rare; usually only an issue with carpal tunnel injections)

8. Transient numbness or tingling (rare)

9. Osteonecrosis (bone death) (rare)

10. Transient rise in blood sugars in diabetics

Please let your doctor know if you are a diabetic. You may need to monitor your blood sugar after the injection.

11. Allergic reaction (<1%)

12. For hip injections: nerve injury-1 in 10 transient sensory loss in femoral territory, 1 in 100 short-term weakness in quadriceps function and 1 in 1000 potentially having a risk of more permanent nerve dysfunction.

Activity:

You must rest the injected limb for 24-48 hours post injection.