**Risk of Steroid Injection with COVID-19**

Following any steroid (cortisone) injection, one of the side-effects is the lowering of the body’s natural immunity - what doctors call “immunosuppression”. The steroid remains active in the body for up to 6 weeks after the injection but is at its peak after about 2 weeks. Due to this effect on the immune system, the individual is potentially at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19. It also means that if that person were to get COVID-19 they might experience more severe symptoms.

Furthermore, if you have COVID-19 but are not experiencing any symptoms the steroid could make you become symptomatic. Due to this the individual must adhere to social distancing rules, handwashing, and mask wearing for 2 weeks, for their own safety, following the injection. If this is not possible, it will not be suitable to have the injection.

For these reasons we would not recommend a steroid injection in anyone who could be at a potential high risk for suffering severe illness with COVID-19, eg. being aged over 70, BAME ethnic background, having diabetes, heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), severe lung disease (mostly COPD and/or asthma), and obesity (BMI over 30).

During this time, a steroid injection should be regarded as a last resort treatment for symptoms (such as significant pain) which are considerably affecting a person’s daily functioning. It will only be considered if rest, physiotherapy (including exercises if unavailable), and pain-relieving and/or anti-inflammatory medications taken for a suitable period, are ineffective.

**Post Injection Advice Sheet**

You have just received an injection with anaesthetic solution, steroid, or a combination of the two. Cortisone, like all steroids, is a very powerful agent for reducing inflammation. Some of the benefits of reducing inflammation include bringing down the pain and swelling. The effects of cortisone may take several days to work but may last for some weeks.

**Risks of COVID-19**

Following any corticosteroid injection, one of the side-effects is the lowering of your body’s natural immunity. The steroid remains active in your body for up to 6 weeks, but it is at its peak at 2 weeks. Due to this effect on the immune system, you are potentially at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19. It also means that if you were to contract COVID-19 you might experience more severe symptoms. If you have COVID-19 but are not experiencing any symptoms the steroid could make you become symptomatic. Due to this, you must adhere to social distancing rules for 2 weeks for your own safety. If you cannot do this, you will not be suitable for the injection.

**Injection Flare**

An injection takes approximately 48 hours to begin acting and between the time of the injection and the point that the cortisone begins to work, you may experience some slight worsening of the pain. This is called flare.

The following measures can be used to limit the severity of any possible injection flare:

* Apply an ice bag to the affected area for 10-15 minutes, repeating hourly as required.
* If your medical condition allows you to take these medications, consider the use of an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as Ibuprofen.
* If your GP has prescribed a prescription anti-inflammatory medication, then continue taking this medication as directed.

**Infection**

If you notice increased pain lasting longer than 48 hours after the injection or increased swelling, redness or warmth around the injection site, or if you feel generally unwell, please inform your GP of your symptoms.

**Diabetic Warning**

If you are diabetic and using insulin, this injection may elevate your blood sugar for the next 1-5 days. Please monitor your sugars closely and if they fail to return to acceptable levels, please contact your GP.

**Follow on Review**

Any follow-on review will be discussed at the time of your appointment. However, should your symptoms return within the time frame and you wish to arrange a further review, please contact the surgery.

**Musculoskeletal Corticosteroid Injection Consent Form**

**Patient Details**

**Full Name:**

**D.O.B:**

**NHS Number:**

**Doctor/Procedure Details**

**Name:**

**Proposed Procedure:**

I understand this injection is a last resort treatment for my symptoms. I am in significant pain, which is affecting my daily functions. I have tried rest, physiotherapy exercises and taken medications for a suitable period. I will adhere to strict social distancing rules for 2 weeks for my own safety.

The proposed procedure and aftercare has been explained and other treatment options have been discussed with me. I have been given an advice sheet and have had the opportunity to ask any questions. I accept the possible side effects/risks outlined below:

* Reduced immunity and greater susceptibility to contracting infections for up to 3 weeks eg. Covid-19
* Injection flare
* Tendon Rupture
* Local bleeding/bruising
* Infection
* Allergic reaction
* Dimpling of the skin
* Loss of skin pigment
* Damage to the local soft tissue

**Date: ………………………………………………………………**

**Patient Signature: ………………………………………………………………**

**Doctor Signature: ………………………………………………………………**