

JOINT INJECTION PROCEDURAL INFORMATION AND POST-PROCEDURAL PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

What is a Joint Injection?

A joint injection is a minimally invasive procedure where a needle is placed into a joint with the assistance of fluoroscopy (real-time X-ray). Once the needle is in the joint, contrast (X-ray dye) is administered into the joint to confirm that the needle tip is in the joint space. Once contrast is seen filling the joint space, medication prescribed by your ordering physician is injected into the joint. The medication usually consists of a combination of a steroid and an anesthetic. These medications help decrease pain and joint inflammation.

Post-Procedural Care

Before the needle is placed into the joint, the tissues around the joint are anesthetized (numbed) with a medication called Lidocaine. Lidocaine effects last approximately one hour. After the effects of the Lidocaine wear off, you may experience some minor discomfort where the needle was placed for a day or two after the procedure. Tylenol or Motrin can be taken to help alleviate any discomfort. Minor bruising and swelling may also occur. The application of ice packs for the first 24 hours (3-4 times, for not more than 15 minutes) followed by hot packs after the first day (20 minutes, four times a day) *may* alleviate pain and swelling.

You may resume light daily activities directly after your procedure. Overexertion/use of the joint after the procedure may irritate and prolong recovery time. You may *shower* the day of the procedure. **DO NOT** bathe, use a hot tub, use a sauna, or go swimming (even in your personal pool) within 7 days after the procedure. This exposes the needle insertion site to bacteria.

Possible Complications after the Procedure

Infection: Infection of the joint or surrounding tissues is a rare, but serious complication (one in 1,000) of an arthrogram and requires treatment with antibiotics. **If you have symptoms of severe pain, swelling, red skin, or develop a fever 3 or more days after the arthrogram, call your physician.**

Allergic reaction: An allergic reaction to the local anesthetic (Lidocaine) or contrast is extremely rare. If an allergic reaction occurs from the local anesthetic or contrast, *most reactions occur within the first 30*

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minutes after being administered. However, reactions can occur up to three days after the procedure (latent reaction). Most allergic reactions are mild; mild allergic reaction symptoms may include redness at the injection site, hives, and/or itchiness. If you develop any of these symptoms, taking Benadryl (**25mg [under the age of 12] and 50mg [over the age of 12]**) with the application of topical Hydrocortisone can help reduce your symptoms. No further treatment is usually necessary. Severe allergic reaction symptoms may include: shortness of breath, facial swelling, tongue and/or throat swelling, rapid heartbeat, and low blood pressure. If you experience any of these symptoms, **dial 911 immediately.**

Bleeding: a small amount of bleeding may occur under the skin, causing bruising or a small lump (hematoma) under the skin. Patients taking blood thinners (Coumadin, Motrin 800 mg, etc.) are more prone to bleeding than patient not on blood thinners. If you notice a lump under the skin, draw a circle around the lump with a marker. The circle will allow you to monitor the size of the lump. If the lump gets bigger, notify your primary care physician. Applying heat over the lump will help the body absorb the blood under the skin. If the lump is painful, you can take over-the-counter pain medication (preferably Tylenol; avoid Motrin or Aspirin, these are blood thinners and may cause further bleeding). **DO NOT** apply an ice pack to the lump; **use heating pads.** Ice packs will constrict the blood vessels around the lump and it will slow the absorption process down.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please call us at 630-545-7880

This information is based off of recommendations from the American College of Radiology and from Johns Hopkins University.