

FACT SHEET

Hip Joint Injections



ANATOMY OF THE HIP JOINT

The hip joint is a large ball and socket joint located where the thigh bone meets the pelvis. The top of the thigh bone (the femur) is a round ball, which fits into the socket formed by a cavity in the pelvic bone.

The ball is held in the socket by a grouping of ligaments that form a capsule around the joint. This capsule of ligaments contains synovial fluid which acts as a lubricant. There is cartilage between the two bones, which allows them to move against each other without causing friction.

If this joint suffers from arthritis, injury, or mechanical stress, you may experience hip, buttock, leg, or low back pain.

PURPOSE OF HIP JOINT INJECTIONS

If you suffer from the symptoms listed above, a hip joint injection may be of benefit. The injection can help relieve the pain, as well as help diagnose the direct cause of pain.

Hip joint injections involve injecting medicine directly into the joint. These injections can help diagnose the source of pain, as well as alleviate the discomfort.

Diagnostic function

By placing numbing medicine into the joint, the amount of immediate pain relief experienced will help confirm whether or not the joint is a source of pain. If complete pain relief is achieved while the hip joint is numb, it means this joint is likely to be the source of pain.

Pain relief function

Along with the numbing medication, time-release cortisone is also injected into these joints to reduce inflammation, which can often provide long term pain relief.

HIP JOINT INJECTION PROCEDURE

Fluoroscopy (live X-ray) is commonly used in hip joint injections for guidance in properly targeting and placing the needle, and for avoiding nerve or other injury.

On the day of the injection, you should avoid driving and doing any strenuous activities.

POST-INJECTION PROCEDURE

The injection itself only takes a few minutes, but the overall procedure will usually take between 30 and 60 minutes.

After the hip joint injection you will usually rest on the table for 20 to 30 minutes. You'll then be asked to move the area of usual discomfort to try to provoke the usual pain.

You may or may not obtain pain relief in the first few hours after the injection, depending upon whether or not the joint that was injected is the main source of the pain.

Occasionally, some patients feel numb or experience a slightly weak or odd feeling in the leg for a few hours after the injection.

You will need to discuss with the doctor any immediate relief of pain. You will also be required to record the levels of pain relief during the next week.

Using a pain diary: A pain diary is helpful to clearly inform the treating physician of the injection results and in planning future tests and/or pain management treatment, as needed.

PAIN RELIEF AFTER A HIP JOINT INJECTION

You may notice a slight increase in pain lasting for several days as the numbing medicine wears off and the cortisone is just starting to take effect.

If the area is uncomfortable in the first two to three days after the injection, applying ice or a cold pack to the general area of the injection site will typically provide pain relief, and be more beneficial than applying heat.

If the hip joint that was treated is the source of the pain, you may begin to notice pain relief starting two to five days after the injection.

If no improvement occurs within 10 days after the injection, then it's unlikely you'll gain any pain relief from the injection and further diagnostic tests may be needed to accurately diagnose the pain.

You may continue to take your regular medicines after the procedure. However, you will need to limit pain medicine within the first four to six hours after the injection, so that the diagnostic information obtained is accurate.

You may be referred for physical therapy or manual therapy after the injection while the numbing medicine is effective and/or over the next several weeks while the cortisone is working.

You may return to your regular activities the day after the procedure. When the pain has improved, it's advisable to start regular exercise and activities in moderation. Even if the pain relief is significant, it's still important to increase activities gradually over one to two weeks to avoid recurrence of pain.

POTENTIAL RISKS OF HIP JOINT INJECTIONS

As with any procedure, there is a risk of complications. Possible side effects from the hip joint injection include:

- allergic reactions to the medications used
- infection (occurs in less than 1 per 15,000 injections)
- post-injection flare (joint swelling and pain several hours after the corticosteroid injection)
- depigmentation (a whitening of the skin)
- local fat atrophy (thinning of the skin)
- rupture of a tendon located in the path of the injection.

DISCLAIMER

Please note the contents contained in this Patient Fact Sheet are not intended as a substitute for your own independent health professional's advice, diagnosis or treatment. At Metro Pain Group, we assess every patient's condition individually. As leaders in pain intervention, we aim to provide advanced, innovative, and evidence-based treatments tailored to suit each patient. As such, recommended treatments and their outcomes will vary from patient to patient. If you would like to find out whether our treatments are suitable for your specific condition, please speak to one of our doctors at the time of your consultation.

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