



Corticosteroid injection

A patient's guide

For anyone living with a painful, inflamed joint or tendon, a corticosteroid injection can calm inflammation, ease pain and help you move more freely, often within a few days.

It is a short procedure carried out in clinic at Opus, in Marylebone, London. A fine needle delivers a powerful anti-inflammatory, usually with a local anaesthetic, sometimes guided by ultrasound for precision. Afterwards, you rest the area for a day or two and let the medication take effect.

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This guide is general information. Your clinician will explain how it applies to you, and their advice always comes first.



01 ABOUT THE TREATMENT

What is a corticosteroid injection?

A corticosteroid injection is used to reduce inflammation, relieve pain and improve mobility in a specific part of the body. It is commonly used for joint pain (such as in the shoulder, knee or hip), tendonitis, bursitis and arthritis.

The injection contains a corticosteroid, a powerful anti-inflammatory medication, and often a local anaesthetic to provide immediate relief.

WHY MIGHT I NEED ONE?

- You have persistent pain or swelling in a joint or soft tissue.
- Other treatments such as rest, physiotherapy or oral medication have not worked.
- Your doctor wants to reduce inflammation to improve function or confirm a diagnosis.

COMMON CONDITIONS TREATED

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Bursitis (hip, shoulder, elbow)
- Tendonitis (Achilles, rotator cuff)
- Plantar fasciitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Frozen shoulder

02 YOUR PROCEDURE

What happens on the day

The procedure usually takes just a few minutes and is carried out in clinic. Ultrasound or fluoroscopic guidance is sometimes used to ensure accurate placement.

01

POSITIONING

You will be seated or lying down, depending on the injection site.

02

CLEANSING

The area is cleaned with an antiseptic solution.

03

INJECTION

Your clinician uses a fine needle to inject the medication into the affected area. You may feel slight pressure or a stinging sensation.

04

AFTERCARE

A dressing may be applied, and you will be observed briefly before going home.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTERWARDS

- Immediate relief from the local anaesthetic may last a few hours.
- The corticosteroid usually starts to work within 24 to 72 hours, and the effect can last weeks to months.
- Mild soreness or swelling at the injection site is common for a day or two.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Strenuous activity or heavy lifting for 24 to 48 hours.
- Soaking the injection site (for example in a bath or hot tub) for 24 hours.

If anything concerns you after your injection, see **When to call us** on page 5.



03 GOOD TO KNOW

Side effects and safety

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Most people tolerate corticosteroid injections well. Some side effects may include:

- A temporary flare-up of pain
- Skin thinning or discolouration at the injection site
- Raised blood sugar, especially in patients with diabetes
- Facial flushing
- Infection (rare)

HOW OFTEN CAN I HAVE THEM?

- Up to three or four injections a year in the same area.
- Overuse may weaken tendons or cartilage, so spacing them out is important.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Tell your doctor if you take blood thinners, have diabetes, or have had a recent infection.
- Keep a note of any previous injections and how well they worked.
- Follow up with your clinician if your symptoms do not improve or get worse.

WHEN TO CALL US

Please contact the Opus team if you notice:

Signs of infection: fever, redness or warmth

Pain that gets worse after a few days

Difficulty moving the joint

+44 (0)208 609 7843

CONTACT US ONLINE →

NEXT STEPS

Where to go from here

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your clinician will talk you through any follow-up and whether rehabilitation, such as physiotherapy, would help you get the most from your treatment.

QUESTIONS BEFORE OR AFTER

Many common questions are answered on our website. If yours is not, call the team on +44 (0)208 609 7843 or contact us online.

CHANGING YOUR APPOINTMENT

If you need to change or cancel, please give us at least 48 hours’ notice.

[FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS →](#) [CONTACT US →](#)

FURTHER READING ON OUR WEBSITE

Physiotherapy at Opus [→](#)

Sports medicine at Opus [→](#)

Common shoulder injuries and how we treat them [→](#)

Plantar fasciitis: a common cause of heel pain [→](#)



GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions before or after your injection, please speak to our team.

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