

Small Peripheral Joint Injection

Background

- Small peripheral joint injections include the thumb, fingers, and toes.
- These joints are prone to arthritis, often resulting in pain

Preparation

- If imaging has been performed elsewhere, please bring any previous relevant CT or MRI with you
- Please advise us at the time of booking if you are taking any blood thinning medication (Warfarin, Plavix), as some need to be stopped 5-7 days prior to the procedure
- Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after the procedure

Potential Risks

- This is a commonly performed procedure, and generally does not result in serious complications
- Some may experience a transient mild headache, which typically resolves spontaneously, but may require paracetamol, rest and fluids
- The injected medication may cause facial blushing/redness, or a rash, which can last for a few days, before resolving
- The steroid may cause fluctuation of blood glucose levels in patients with diabetes, and close monitoring of BSL is recommended
- Although rare, serious risks include:
 - Infection: the majority (1-2%) are minor, however, can be serious (<0.1%) requiring intravenous antibiotics and hospital admission
 - Bleeding/Haematoma: rare, but particularly in patients on "blood thinning" medication, or bleeding disorders

Procedure

- The procedure takes up to 15 minutes, and is usually tolerated well
- Most injections are performed under ultrasound guidance
- An initial ultrasound will be performed to ensure adequate access to the joint
- An antiseptic wash will be applied
- Short acting local anaesthetic is generally injected, which may sting for 10-30 seconds before numbing the region
- A very fine needle is advanced into the joint
- A combination of steroid and long acting anaesthetic is injected
- The local anaesthetic wears off after a few hours
- The steroid can take between 24 hours and up to 2 weeks for complete effect

Aftercare

- You may feel some minor discomfort at the site of injection
- The local anaesthetic should result in you being pain free for as short period of time
- Please do not drive for the rest of the day
- 48 hours of rest / reduced activity is recommended, with gradual return to normal activities

Injection Efficacy

- The steroid reduces the degree of inflammation and swelling within the joint. This assists in reducing the pain and symptoms caused by inflammation and irritation of the joints and surrounding tissues
- Occasionally, despite accurate needle placement and satisfactory technique, symptoms may persist
- The duration of symptom improvement varies, and unfortunately, cannot be accurately predicted prior to the procedure
- Occasionally multiple injections are required, and should be performed at least one month apart