**Patient Information Leaflet**

**JOINT INJECTIONS**

**Portcullis Surgery is committed to providing best practice & high-quality medical care.**

**What is a steroid injection?**

Hydrocortisone injections are used to treat swollen or painful joints, such as after an injury or if you have arthritis.

The hydrocortisone is injected directly into the painful joint. This is called an intra-articular injection.

The joints most often injected are the shoulder, elbow, knee, hand, wrist or hip.

Hydrocortisone injections are also used to treat painful tendons and bursitis (when a small bag of fluid which cushions a joint gets inflamed).

They're sometimes used to treat muscle pain when it's in a particular area.

The injections usually help relieve pain and swelling, and make movement easier. The benefits can last for several months.

**How can I book in a steroid injection?**

* Please fill in the CONSENT form below with as much information as possible.
* This form will be given to Dr Beanland or Dr Perks to review.
* The reception team will get back in touch with you within 7 working days.
* Dr Beanland and Dr Perks may request a face to face appointment first so they can review the injection you would like treated or they may ask for you to be booked in for the next available minor surgery slot.

**On the day of the procedure**

* Please read the information on the leaflet carefully, and ask if there is anything that you do not understand.
* Prior to the procedure, you must fill this consent form in online and send it to the practice to add to your notes or print it out and hand in to Dr Beanland or Dr Perks.

**Key facts**

* Hydrocortisone injections for joint pain work by releasing the medicine slowly into the joint. This reduces pain and swelling.
* After an injection, your joint may feel better for several months –sometimes as long as a year.
* Some people get increased pain and swelling in their joint immediately after having the injection. This pain tends to go away after a few days.
* Depending on which joint is being treated, you may be able to have injections in the same place up to 4 times a year.
* Hydrocortisone injections can affect your immune system, so you're more likely to get infections. Tell your doctor if you come into contact with [chickenpox](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chickenpox/), [shingles](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/shingles/) or [measles](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/) as these infections could make you very ill.
* If you have been having long-term hydrocortisone injections for a long time, you may need to carry a steroid emergency card. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you do not have one.

## Side effects

Most people do not have any side effects after a hydrocortisone injection. Side effects are less likely if only one part of the body is injected.

If you’re having high doses of hydrocortisone injections, or you’re also taking other steroid medicines or tablets for fungal infections or HIV, you may get underactive adrenal glands as a side effect. Ask your doctor if you need to carry a steroid emergency card.

### **Common side effects**

* The most common side effect is intense pain and swelling in the joint where the injection was given. This usually gets better after a day or two.
* You may also get some bruising where the injection was given. This should go away after a few days.
* It helps to rest the joint for 24 hours after the injection and avoid heavy exercise. It's safe to take everyday painkillers such as [paracetamol](https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-adults/) or [ibuprofen](https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/ibuprofen-for-adults/).

### **Serious side effects**

* With hydrocortisone injections, the medicine is placed directly into the painful or swollen joint. It does not travel through the rest of your body. That means, it's less likely to cause side effects.
* Sometimes, though, hydrocortisone from a joint injection can get into your blood. This is more likely to happen if you've had several injections.
* If hydrocortisone gets into your blood, it can travel around your body and there's a very small chance that you may have a serious side effect.

**Call a doctor straight away if you:**

* are depressed (including having suicidal thoughts), feeling high, mood swings, feeling anxious, seeing or hearing things that are not there or having strange or frightening thoughts – these can be signs of mental health problems
* have a high temperature, chills, a very sore throat, ear or sinus pain, a cough, pain when you pee, mouth sores or a wound that will not heal – these can be signs of an infection
* are sleepy or confused, feeling very thirsty or hungry, peeing more often than usual, flushing, breathing quickly or having breath that smells like fruit – these can be signs of [diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/) or complications of diabetes
* have a "moon face" (a puffy, rounded face), weight gain in the upper back or belly – this happens gradually and can be a sign of [Cushing's syndrome](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cushings-syndrome/)
* have swelling or throbbing in your arms or legs, or if you feel breathless or have chest pain – these can be signs of a [deep vein thrombosis (DVT)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/deep-vein-thrombosis-dvt/) or a blood clot
* have any changes to your eyesight

Some of these side effects, such as mood changes, can happen after a few days. Others, such as getting a rounder face, can happen weeks or months after treatment.

#### **Children and teenagers**

In rare cases, if your child or teenager has hydrocortisone injections over many months or years, it can slow down their normal growth.

Your child's doctor will monitor their height and weight carefully for as long as they're having treatment with hydrocortisone. This will help them spot any slowing down of your child's growth and change their treatment if needed.

Even if your child's growth slows down, it does not seem to have much effect on their overall adult height.

Talk to your doctor if you're worried. They will be able to explain the benefits and risks of giving your child hydrocortisone injections.

#### **Serious allergic reaction**

It's extremely rare to have an allergic reaction ([anaphylaxis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/)) to a hydrocortisone injection.

##### Immediate action required:Call 999 or go to A&E now if:

* you get a skin rash that may include itchy, red, swollen, blistered or peeling skin
* you're wheezing
* you get tightness in the chest or throat
* you have trouble breathing or talking
* your mouth, face, lips, tongue or throat start swelling

You could be having a serious allergic reaction and may need immediate treatment in hospital.

These are not all the side effects of hydrocortisone injections.