

Joint and Soft Tissue Injections

Joint and soft tissue injections are shots with a needle. They can be given in a joint, such as your knee, or a soft tissue site, such as the space between a muscle and bone. Injections can help diagnose or treat many different conditions. Examples include:

- bursitis
- tendonitis
- arthritis
- osteoarthritis
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- rheumatism

The needle can be used to take out fluid or put in medicine. Anti-inflammatory medicines are the most common drugs to use in injections. These include corticosteroids and pain relievers, such as lidocaine. Before getting an injection, it is important to tell your doctor if you are allergic to steroids or other medicines.

Path to improved health

Before the shot, your doctor will probably give you a local anesthetic. This helps reduce the pain of the injection needle. After the shot, you may have some pain once the anesthetic wears off. Ask your doctor if you can take an oral pain reliever. You also can apply ice on the site for 15 minutes several times a day.

Some people need more than one injection. Your doctor will talk to you about how many you need and how often.

Things to consider

Injections do have possible side effects. Swelling and irritation are the most common. These are known as a post-injection flare and may last up to 48 hours. Less common side effects are infection, tendon rupture, and muscle damage. In order to reduce your risk of infection, follow your doctor's instructions and keep the injection site clean.

When to see a doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- redness
- warmth at the site
- continued pain

- fever
- abnormal reaction

Questions for your doctor

- What are the benefits and risks of injections?
- How many injections do I need and how often?
- What restrictions do I have after an injection?

Resources

American Family Physician: Joint and Soft Tissue Injection
(<https://www.aafp.org/afp/2002/0715/p283.html>)

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This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject.