

Fluoroscopy-guided Steroid Joint Injection

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains a fluoroscopy-guided steroid joint injection, which is done to help treat arthritis pain.

What is a fluoroscopy-guided steroid joint injection?

This type of injection is done using a *fluoroscope*, a type of X-ray machine that shows live pictures of your joint. The procedure uses *contrast* (X-ray dye) to help the radiologist clearly see where to make the injection. A steroid medicine such as Kenalog is then injected into the joint.

How will this injection help me?

Steroids help to reduce inflammation in a joint. Your provider believes that this injection can help reduce your arthritis pain.

How does it work?

A radiologist will use the fluoroscope to help guide a small needle into your joint. Contrast is injected through this needle. X-rays will then be taken to make sure that the needle is in the correct place.

Steroids and a numbing medicine such as Lidocaine or Bupivacaine will then be injected into your joint.

How do I prepare?

You do not need to do anything special to prepare. You may eat and drink as usual.

What should I expect?

- The technologist may ask you to change into a gown. You may also need to remove jewelry if it will affect the X-ray images.



Talk with your provider if you have questions about this treatment or about your arthritis

- The radiologist who will do the procedure will explain what will happen, talk about possible risks, and answer any questions you may have.
- In the X-ray exam room, you will lie on a table.
- The skin around your joint will be washed with antiseptic. A local *anesthetic* (numbing medicine) may be injected into the area around your joint. You may feel a pinprick and burning as the anesthetic is injected.
- After your skin is numb, a needle will be placed into your joint. Fluoroscope images will be used to help the radiologist place the needle.
- Contrast will then be injected through the needle. The contrast will show if the needle is in the best place for the steroid injection.
- Steroid and numbing medicines will then be injected into the joint.
- After the medicines are injected, the needle will be removed.
- The procedure usually takes 30 to 45 minutes.

What happens after the injection?

- You may leave the Radiology Department right after your injection.
- Do only light activity for the rest of the day.

When to Call

If you have a lot of pain or bleeding after your injection, please call the Radiology Department or your referring provider **right away**. It is rare to get a joint infection after this procedure, but it can happen. If you get an infection, it should be treated right away.

How long will the pain relief last?

- The local anesthetic will numb your joint pain at first, but this will wear off in a few hours. When it does, you will likely return to your usual pain level. It will be several days before the steroid medicine starts to work.
- Pain relief from this injection can last from a few weeks to a few months. This depends on your level of arthritis.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

**UW Medical Center
Roosevelt Clinic
Radiology:**

To schedule an appointment, call
206.598.7200

For questions, call
206.598.6622

**Harborview Medical
Center Imaging
Services:**

To schedule an appointment, call
206.744.3105

For questions, call
206.744.2500