

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 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 can help reduce inflammation in a joint. Your provider believes that this injection can help lessen 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. We will then take X-rays to make sure the needle is in the right place.

We will then inject steroids and a numbing medicine such as Lidocaine or Bupivacaine into your joint.

How do I prepare?

- *If you were assigned female at birth:* Tell your provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if there is any chance you could be pregnant.

On Treatment Day

- You may eat and drink as usual. You do not need to do anything special to prepare.
- *If you were assigned female at birth:* **Before** treatment begins, tell the technologist if there is any chance you could be pregnant.



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

What should I expect?

- The technologist may ask you to change into a gown. We may also ask you to remove jewelry if it will affect the X-ray images.
- The radiologist will explain what will happen, talk about possible risks, and answer any questions you may have.
- We will then:
 - Ask you to lie on an exam table in the X-ray exam room.
 - Use an antiseptic to wash the skin around your joint.
- We may inject a local *anesthetic* (numbing medicine) into the area around your joint. You may feel a pinprick and burning as the anesthetic is injected.
- After your skin is numb, the radiologist will use fluoroscope images to help place a needle into your joint. We will then inject contrast through the needle. The contrast will show if the needle is in the best place for the steroid injection.
- We will then inject steroid and numbing medicines into the joint.
- After the medicines are injected, we will remove the needle.
- The procedure usually takes 30 to 45 minutes.

Questions?

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

UWMC - Roosevelt 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

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 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.

Once the steroid medicine starts working, pain relief can last from a few weeks to a few months. This depends on your level of arthritis.