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## **PATIENT GUIDE TO KNEE INJECTIONS**

### **What is a cortisone injection?**

A cortisone injection consists of a steroid medication (cortisone or its derivative) and short acting numbing medication (lidocaine).

### **How does a cortisone injection help?**

The injection helps by providing medication directly to the area of inflammation to reduce pain and swelling.

### **How long will it take to work?**

The numbing medicine usually sets in right away, within a few minutes. This can last for several hours. However, by the evening after the injection, this effect wears off, and the limb can be sore. It usually takes a few days for the steroid to take effect.

### **How long will the injection last?**

The effect of steroid injections is variable. In some patients, the effect is very short lived (a few days). However, it is generally hoped that the injection will last up to 3 months. In many patients, the injection is enough to calm down the inflammation and pain so that the symptoms are completely resolved.

### **What are the possible side effects?**

The side effects of cortisone injections are extremely low. However, possible side effects include: skin discoloration at the site of the injection; a steroid flare (increased discomfort within 48 hours of the injection); and an infection from penetrating the skin with the injection. Too many injections or injections too often can weaken the tissues.

### **When can I return to my activity?**

The injection will not prevent you from returning to your usual activity, such as work. However, you should refrain from sports for the first few days to allow the steroid to begin working.

### **What is a hyaluronic acid (HA) injection?**

HA injections consists of a protein that occurs naturally in the joint surface cartilage. There are many brands of this type of injection.

### **How does a HA injection help?**

The injection helps by providing medication directly to the knee joint, which provides cushioning and lubrication, while also providing a mild anti-inflammatory effect.

### **How long will it take to work?**

It usually takes at least two weeks for the HA to take effect, but improvement can be seen for up to 2 months.

### **How long will the injection last?**

The effect of HA injections is variable. In some patients, the effect is very short lived (a few days). However, it is generally hoped that the injection will last up to 6 months. In many patients, the injection is enough to calm down the inflammation and pain so that the symptoms are completely resolved. They can be repeated, and your insurance will typically cover 2 treatments annually for as long as they continue to work.

### **What are the possible side effects?**

The side effects of HA injections are extremely low. However, possible side effects include: irritation at the site of the injection; a flare (increased discomfort within 48 hours of the injection); and an infection from penetrating the skin with the injection.

### **When can I return to my activity?**

The injection will not prevent you from returning to your usual activity, such as work. However, you should refrain from sports for the first few days to allow the HA to begin working.

### **What is a Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) injection?**

A PRP injection consists of a biologic injection that is made by spinning your blood in a centrifuge to separate the layers of the blood. The plasma layer is then removed and injected into the knee.

### **How does a PRP injection help?**

The injection helps by providing healing and growth factors directly to the area of inflammation to reduce pain and swelling. In addition, there is some evidence that PRP may protect the remaining cartilage from further arthritis changes. At this time, no evidence exists that PRP will regrow cartilage.

### **How long will it take to work?**

The numbing medicine usually sets in right away, within a few minutes. This can last for several hours. However, by the evening after the injection, this effect wears off, and the limb can be sore. It usually takes a few days to several weeks for the PRP to take effect.

### **How long will the injection last?**

The effect of PRP injections is variable. In some patients, the effect is very short lived (a few days). However, it is generally hoped that the injection will last up to 12 months. In many patients, the injection is enough to calm down the inflammation and pain so that the symptoms are completely resolved. In most recent published studies, the benefit is seen with patients having more pain relief at month 6 and 12 after the injection when compared to cortisone or HA. PRP and HA may be combined, and some evidence shows that they last longer when given together than by themselves.

### **What are the possible side effects?**

The side effects of PRP injections are extremely low. However, possible side effects include: irritation at the site of the injection; a flare (increased discomfort within 48 hours of the injection); and an infection from penetrating the skin with the injection.

### **When can I return to my activity?**

The injection will not prevent you from returning to your usual activity, such as work. However, you should refrain from sports for the first few days to allow the PRP to begin working. You must avoid NSAIDs like ibuprofen or diclofenac for 6 weeks.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Cortisone and HA are both covered by insurance. HA will require preauthorization, which is handled by our business office. Many times, your insurance will require a cortisone injection before they cover HA.

PRP is not covered by any insurance programs at this time. Our office charges a 1 time \$500 payment to cover the cost of the equipment needed for the PRP. This covers the cost of the injection as well.