



Steroid injections serve as an effective treatment for a variety of conditions in which inflammation causes pain, swelling, or other problems. It is not a cure for the underlying condition but may provide temporary pain relief in a matter of days that may last days, weeks, or even months. The injections can help your health care provider determine your diagnosis and will allow you to progress with your physical therapy rehabilitation.

What Medication Is Used

The medication used is not a pain reliever but a powerful anti-inflammatory medication which reduces the inflammation and therefore the pain.

Synthetic corticosteroids such as Kenalog are most commonly used for their potent anti-inflammatory effects. Unlike oral anti-inflammatory drugs the cortisone is injected directly to the source of the problem.

Although the injection is usually very well tolerated by the patient, a numbing medication such as Lidocaine is often used with the steroid to provide temporary pain relief of the affected area.

Side Effects

Because the area of injection is prepared with an antibacterial cleaning, and the procedure is carried out using sterile technique, side effects such as an infection are extremely rare. Some people experience a brief period of increased pain lasting 1-2 days after the injection. This is normal and the pain will go away. Applying ice to the affected area, avoiding tasks that might irritate the area, and rest is the recommended treatment. If you are a diabetic, your blood sugars may be slightly elevated after the injection.

Recommended Follow Up

A return visit is recommended 3-4 weeks after the injection to assess the effects of the injection. You might be asked to keep a diary recording your pain relief on a daily basis along with your physical activity. All this information will be evaluated to determine the next step in your treatment plan.