Knee Injection

Joint injections are shots. Your caregiver will place a needle into your knee joint. The needle is used to put medicine into the joint. These shots can be used to help treat different painful knee conditions such as osteoarthritis, bursitis, local flare-ups of rheumatoid arthritis, and pseudogout. Anti-inflammatory medicines such as corticosteroids and anesthetics are the most common medicines used for joint and soft tissue injections.

THE PROCEDURE

- The skin over the kneecap will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution.
- Your caregiver will inject a small amount of a local anesthetic (a medicine like Novocaine) just under the skin in the area that was cleaned.
- After the area becomes numb, a second injection is done. This second injection usually includes an anesthetic and an anti-inflammatory medicine called a steroid or cortisone. The needle is carefully placed in between the kneecap and the knee, and the medicine is injected into the joint space.
- After the injection is done, the needle is removed. Your caregiver may place a bandage over the injection site. The whole procedure takes no more than a couple of minutes.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

Wash all of the skin around the entire knee area. Try to remove any loose, scaling skin. There is no other specific preparation necessary unless advised otherwise by your caregiver.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT:

- Allergies.
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams.
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams).
- Possible pregnancy, if applicable.
- Previous problems with anesthetics or Novocaine.
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*).
- History of bleeding or blood problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other health problems.

RISKS & COMPLICATIONS OF THE PROCEDURE

Side effects from cortisone shots are rare. They include:

- Slight bruising of the skin.
- Shrinkage of the normal fatty tissue under the skin where the shot was given.
- Increase in pain after the shot.
- Infection.
- Weakening of tendons or tendon rupture.
- Allergic reaction to the medicine.
- Diabetics may have a temporary increase in their blood sugar after a shot.
- Cortisone can temporarily weaken the immune system. While receiving these shots, you should not get certain vaccines. Also, avoid contact with anyone who has chickenpox or measles. Especially if you have never had these diseases or have not been previously immunized. Your immune system may not be strong enough to fight off the infection while the cortisone is in your system.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- You can go home after the procedure.
- You may need to put ice on the joint 20 to 30 minutes every 3 or 4 hours until the pain goes away.

- You may need to put an elastic bandage on the joint.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- You should avoid stressing the joint. Unless advised otherwise, avoid activities that put a lot of pressure on a knee joint, such as:
  - Jogging.
  - Bicycling.
  - Recreational climbing.
  - Hiking.
- Laying down and elevating the leg/knee above the level of your heart can help to minimize swelling.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have repeated or worsening swelling.
- There is drainage from the puncture area.
- You develop red streaking that extends above or below the site where the needle was inserted.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a fever.
- You have pain that gets worse even though you are taking pain medicine.
- The area is red and warm, and you have trouble moving the joint.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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