CARPAL TUNNEL STEROID INJECTION – PATIENT INFORMATION

What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)

CTS is characterised by tingling, numbness, or pain in the distribution of the median nerve (the thumb, index, and middle fingers, and half the ring finger) that is often worse at night and causes wakening. The offending hand may be hung out of the bed at odd angles to try to revive it. Pain may become more persistent, and may radiate to the forearm, elbow, arm and shoulder.

Weakness may be noted in hand and pincer grip.

You have received an injection of a steroid into your carpal tunnel to try relieving the symptoms that you are experiencing.

Why have I had this treatment?

The injection is to reduce any inflammation, swelling and pain within the carpal tunnel, a compartment in your hand which is bounded on three sides by carpal bones which form an arch, and on the palm side by the transverse carpal ligament. Pressure on the median nerve going through this tunnel is the cause of this pain.

Can I eat and drink normally prior to coming to this procedure?

You can eat and drink normally prior to this procedure as it involves an injection into your wrist and requires no anaesthetic prior to this procedure.

Do I need to rest after the injection?

You should not drive immediately after the injection. It is best to avoid strenuous use of the hand for the first couple of days so you may find it difficult to work.

How long will the steroid injection take to work, and how long will it last?

It could take a few days to become effective but will give benefit for 2 months or longer in 70% of cases.

What are the possible risks or side effects?

Side effects are very unlikely. Very occasionally people notice a flare up in their pain within the first 24 hours after an injection. This usually settles on its own within a couple of days. Very rarely infection might be introduced at the time of injection. Therefore if the area becomes more painful and hot you should see your GP immediately, especially if you feel unwell.

Occasionally some thinning or change in the colour of the skin may occur at the injection site.

Local steroid injections may sometimes cause facial flushing or interfere with the menstrual cycle but these are rare unless injections are given frequently.

If the injection has worked, how often can it be repeated?

The injection will only be given once. If your carpal tunnel is still a problem or you get a recurrence then surgery may be the best option. This will be discussed with you, if necessary, at your follow up appointment.

Do I need special checks while having steroid injections?

No

May I take other medicines along with steroid injections?

You may take other medicines with steroid injections. If you are taking anticoagulants (e.g. warfarin) you should mention this to the person giving you the injection.

Can I take painkillers if necessary?

You can take painkillers afterwards if you feel any discomfort. Please follow the instructions on the packet.

Can I have immunisations after a steroid injection?

Yes

May I drink alcohol after a steroid injection?

Yes

Where can I obtain further information?

If you would like further information about steroid injections, or if you have any concerns about your treatment, you should discuss this with the doctor who is treating you, your GP or your pharmacist. More information can be found at www.arc.org.uk

Novus Health is keen to ensure that the service provided is of a high quality. If you have any comments to make regarding the service you have received then please feel free to contact us.

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