

Sacroiliac Joint Corticosteroid Injection

The sacroiliac joint is a joint between the ilium (a part of the pelvis) and sacrum (tailbone) and can cause pain in the buttock and lower back, thigh, outside of hip and groin. Local anaesthetic and corticosteroid can be injected into the joint which may help reduce inflammation and pain.

Benefits

Pain relief: Up to 3 in 10 people with suspected sacroiliac joint pain may experience significant relief at 4-6 weeks. If pain relief is significant but temporary a 'radiofrequency denervation' may be considered to achieve longer term pain relief.

Risks

Very Common: More than 1 person in 10 are affected

No benefit: Injection treatments are not always effective.

Common: between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people are affected

Tenderness and/or bruising: Mild local tenderness and / or bruising at the site of the injection, that usually settles over the first few days

Uncommon: Between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 are affected

Numbness and/or weakness: The local anaesthetic may rarely spread causing some numbness and/or weakness in your legs and other areas. Should this occur, the effect is temporary and will rapidly resolve over minutes or rarely hours

Rare: Between 1 in 1,000 and 1 in 10,000 people are affected

Infection: This is rare. You should seek medical help if there is local warmth or redness over the site of injection with tenderness and/or you feel hot and unwell. This may require antibiotic treatment.

Allergy: Injected dye, local anaesthetic and/or steroid may rarely cause an allergic reaction

Very Rare: Fewer than 1 in 10,000 people are affected

Nerve injury: There are important nerves in the spine, but serious nerve injury is very rare (less than 1 in 10,000 cases). Injury to nerves that supply muscles to your leg can lead to foot drop for lumbar injections causing you to be unable to lift your foot up. Great care is taken during the procedure to avoid this very rare complication by placing the needles carefully under x-ray and only treating the nerves when the doctor is confident that they are in the right position

Potential side effects of corticosteroid:

Flare Up: Occasionally people notice a flare in their pain within the first 24 hours after an injection. This usually settles on its own within a couple of days. Use your usual pain killers to relieve symptoms.

Thinning of skin: Occasionally some thinning of the skin or dimpling skin colour change may occur at the injection site. This is more likely to happen if you have a higher dose of steroid.

Facial flushing: Steroid injections may sometimes cause facial flushing or interfere with the menstrual cycle making them irregular temporarily. However you should consult your GP if concerned, or if it persists.

Mood change: Any treatment with steroids may cause changes in mood – either elation or depression. This may be more common in people with a previous history of mood disturbance. If you have concerns please discuss this with your doctor.

Change in glycaemic control: People with diabetes may find that the steroid injection affects their blood sugar control; sometimes you may notice a temporary blood sugar rise. It is recommended that you check your blood levels more regularly; it may take between 1-3 weeks for them to settle.