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Cortisone Advice Sheet (P11)

WHAT IS IT? Cortisone is a powerful anti-inflammatory which will reduce pain.

AIMS OF CORTISONE INJECTION To reduce pain and inflammation associated with soft tissue injury or early arthritis of a joint.

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST The effect of cortisone is unpredictable. In some conditions it can cure the problem in others the effect is short term only i.e. just days or weeks.

OVERVIEW

Injection time Most injections will take 30-60 seconds, although nerve injections may take a few minutes.

Injection placement The injection is most effective if placed in the area of most pain.

Is the injection site numbed first The cortisone is combined with local anaesthetic to relieve any discomfort during the injection. Sometimes the area is anaesthetised prior to injection.

Time off work It is advisable to rest on the day of the injection but you can return to normal the following day.

Pain associated with the injection Obviously pain is very subjective but most people would rate the pain as 2 or 3 on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the worst agony imaginable. **Onset** The effect should be noticeable within the first 3 days.

Indications for cortisone in foot pain: Heel pain, pain in the knuckle joint of the ball of the foot, Morton's neuroma pain, tendonitis, joint pain (e.g. arthritis).

Maximum number of injections: Usually if the problem is going to respond to cortisone it will do so within 3 injections, if there is no improvement after this it is unlikely that further injections will help.

RISKS OF CORTISONE INJECTIONS

Flare up of pain so the condition gets worse in the first 1-3 days.	Allergic reaction usually no more than facial flushing.
Thinning of the skin	Weakening of the tendon and rupture of the tendon
Loss of pigment in the skin	Failure to improve pain
Damage to the joint cartilage	

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Anti-inflammatory gels e.g. Voltarol (available over-the-counter)	Ice and rest
Padding, strapping and splints	Foot supports (orthoses)
Compressive bandaging	Glucosamine-chondroitin-MSM tablets
Joint fluid replacement injections (e.g. Ostenil)	Appropriate surgical intervention