

# Depomedrone (steroid) injection

## Patient Information

### How do steroids work?

Depomedrone (Depo) is a synthetic steroid that is an effective way to reduce an acute episode of inflammation. It is used to treat inflammatory osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

### When do I need an injection?

A depomedrone (Depo) injection is only given when you are having a flare in your arthritis symptoms. This could be swelling, pain and stiffness in your joints.

There are many avenues you can try to relieve pain before a Depo should be considered - anti-inflammatory painkillers, heat pads, cold compresses, deep heat and non-steroidal gels. It is important to keep your joints moving as much as you can as stiff joints are more painful.

Depo should not be given unless you are experiencing an active flare and never as a precaution.

### What are the possible side effects?

#### In the short term -

- Raised blood sugar levels in diabetic patients
- Mood changes, insomnia, depression, delusions
- Can affect menstrual cycle in women
- Increased appetite
- Increased sweating
- Headaches
- Allergic rhinitis
- Visual impairment
- Poor wound healing

#### With long term regular use -

- fat atrophy at injection sites leading to skin dimpling, scarring or thinning
- Thinning of bones (osteoporosis)
- Muscle wasting
- Cushing's syndrome ( Moon face appearance)
- Increased hair growth
- Hypertension

Some medications can interact with Depo – please bring a list of your current medications with you so the nurse can advise you.

**A Depo cannot be given when you have an active infection or are on antibiotics**

**If you are due to have surgery please let us know and we can advise you**

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED AN INJECTION?**

If you are having a flare, and have tried the self-help remedies described above, but are still struggling, please call the **Rheumatology Advice Line 01932 722703**.

A nurse will have a discussion with you and book an appointment if appropriate.

At the appointment, the nurse will examine you and assess if a Depo injection is indicated. Please bring a list of your current medication. This appointment may also be an opportunity to have a look at your current treatment and see if any changes are needed.

The injection is given into the gluteal muscle in the buttock.

## **HOW OFTEN CAN I HAVE A DEPO INJECTION?**

Depo injections should not be given more frequently than every 3 months, to minimise the risk of side effects. In certain situations it may be possible to have a Depo more frequently, but this will need to be discussed on an individual basis with your consultant.

## **DOSAGE**

There are two doses of Depo available – we try where possible to use the lower dose of 120mg to minimise the risk of side effects. However, in certain situations it may be possible to use the higher dose of 160mg. This will need to be discussed with your consultant.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A REACTION**

Very rarely, patients may experience an adverse reaction to the Depo injection. If you experience facial swelling, tingling of lips or shortness of breath, please call 999 and go to A and E.

If you experience other side effects that you think may be secondary to the Depo injection, please call the Advice Line 01932 722703 and talk to the nurses.

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## **Further Information**

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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