

# Advice following a steroid injection in the hand or wrist



**Information for patients**  
The Sheffield Hand Centre



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





## **Why have I been given this leaflet?**

You have been given this leaflet as you have had a steroid injection to treat a problem in your hand or wrist. In many cases, this is the only treatment you will need. This means you are unlikely to be given a routine appointment to be seen again in The Sheffield Hand Centre.

We have provided the following information to help you understand what to expect and when to seek advice. We hope you will find this helpful and we wish you a good recovery.

## **What can I expect following my steroid injection?**

Your hand or wrist is likely to be uncomfortable after the injection and you may need to take simple painkillers, such as paracetamol, for a few days. You may notice a small bruise develop where the injection was done.

## **Is there anything I can do to help my recovery?**

It is important to move your hand and wrist regularly after your injection, even if they feel stiff.

If your hand becomes swollen, it is important to keep it raised above your heart, whenever possible, for the first couple of days. This will also help to reduce any discomfort. You can elevate your hand by using a sling or by sitting with pillows or cushions so that your hand is level with your shoulder. You can also lie with your hand across your chest on a pillow or cushion.

## **What should I look out for after the injection?**

Please contact the Hand Centre if you experience any of the following:

- Severe bruising and swelling
- The injected area becomes red, hot and swollen - as this may suggest an infection

If you have an infection you may need treatment with antibiotics. Out of hours, seek medical attention via your GP, NHS 111 or a Walk-in Centre.

## **Will I need to be off work?**

It is unusual for a steroid injection to lead to time off work but if your symptoms deteriorate following your injection you may need to take some time to rest whilst it recovers. You can self-certify for sickness absence for up to 7 days. Your GP can provide a sick note for you in the unlikely event that you need a longer period off work.

## **When can I return to normal activities?**

Your hand can be used for light activities immediately after the injection. You can build up to normal activities over the next few days.

## **Can I drive after my injection?**

There is not usually any problem with driving straight after the injection. If you are in pain afterwards, it is advisable to wait until you are more comfortable. If you have any doubts you must check with your car insurance provider.

## What can I expect over the next few months?

- Any improvement from steroid injections can last between 2 months and 2 years.
- Sometimes patients require more than one steroid injection to treat their condition.
- If your consultant needs to assess your response to the steroid injection a further appointment will be made.
- In general no further follow up is required. However, if you continue to have problems with your hand **within the first six months following your injection** you can arrange another appointment with your consultant by calling **(0114) 2715684**.
- If you have a problem after six months please see your GP who can arrange for further treatment or for a referral back to the Hand Centre.

## **Who should I contact if I have any concerns or queries?**

**If you have a problem or need advice after going home please contact:**

The Sheffield Hand Centre

- **0114 305 2364**  
Monday to Friday: 7.00am – 7.30pm  
Saturday: 7.00am – 3.00pm

**Outside of these hours when the Hand Centre is closed please ring:**

The Surgical Assessment Centre

- **0114 226 9400**

**Alternatively you can contact:**

- Your GP
- Local Walk-in Centre
- NHS helpline on 111



Alternative formats can be available on request.  
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