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YOU HAVE HAD A CORTICOSTEROID INJECTION

Corticosteroids are the strongest anti-inflammatory medication available and it is used in the treatment of inflammatory problems such as tendonitis, bursitis, and joint inflammation from injury, arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome and other muscular, bone or joint problems.

The “cure rate” of a single injection depends on the diagnosis: deQuervain’s tendonitis, ganglion cyst of the tendon sheath and early carpal tunnel syndrome may get long-term relief or cure from a single injection. Severe osteoarthritis, long-standing carpal tunnel syndrome or a large ganglion of the joints will often recur. However, the injection may give substantial symptomatic relief.

SIDE EFFECTS from the injection are usually minimal but may include:

1. Most commonly, some tenderness at the site of the injection for 24-48 hours. Local ice applications may be helpful.
2. Numbness lasting from a few hours. Almost all injections include a combination of cortisone preparation and local anesthetic which will wear off in a short period of time. For carpal tunnel injections, the thumb, index, long and ring may get numb which is why we caution injecting both hands if you have driven to the office by yourself.
3. Facial flushing, warmth or “hot flashes”. The amount of corticosteroid used in a single injection is quite small. Therefore, this side effect is extremely rare and if it occurs, it is mild and is gone within hours. If multiple areas are injected at the same appointment, it is somewhat more likely to occur, particularly in women over the age of 50.
4. Multiple injections in the same area (meaning more than 3-4 in a period of a few months) can cause skin depigmentation, atrophy at the site of injection, nerve, joint and bone deterioration. Therefore, we do not recommend multiple repeated injections, nor will we repeat injections in the same area unless 3-4 months have passed since previous injections.

Cortisone injections, when appropriately used, can be very helpful in treatment of inflammatory problems and can also be helpful in cases where diagnoses are difficult or equivocal. If you have any additional questions in regard to your injection, please let us know.