Can the injection be repeated?
Yes but usually no more than three or four times a year. The doctor can discuss this with you.

Can more than one injection be injected at the same time?
Yes. Again the doctor can discuss this with you.
What is a joint injection?
A small injection into any joint between two bones.

Why am I having one?
Normally a joint injection is performed to reduce pain, inflammation and swelling from a joint. This helps to restore comfort and improve mobility to the joint. Occasionally it is performed to diagnose or confirm a specific area from which pain is arising.

Do I have to come into hospital?
The joints in the hand and wrist are very small. Because of this the doctor uses an x-ray machine to help locate the exact site of injection to make sure the injection goes into the joint. In order for the doctor to use the x-ray machine, you may have to come into hospital for a few hours.

What happens?
The area to be injected is cleaned. Normally a combination of local anaesthetic (which is a pain killer) and steroid (which is an anti-inflammatory drug) is injected into the joint. The local anaesthetic helps to reduce the pain in the short-term and the steroid helps to reduce the pain in the long-term.

Does it hurt?
Normally there is no more pain than a normal injection for a blood test or vaccination.

What happens afterwards?
Sometimes you are advised to rest the joint as this may help the joint pain and swelling to settle down. A splint may be used to help rest the joint. The doctor will advise you on this.

Are there any side effects or risks?
Patients often experience a warm reddening of the skin for a short while after the injection. An increase in pain can occur after the injection. This varies considerably but may last up to 24 hours. The local anaesthetic is given with the injection to help reduce this side effect.

Very occasionally some of the steroid leaks out of the joint. This can cause the skin over the injection site to become lightened in colour. This effect is often temporary, but occasionally it can be permanent.

The amount of steroid injected into the joint is very small and the body quickly removes it. It does not have any of the general effects found with taking long term steroids.

How long do the benefits of the injection last?
As everyone is an individual, some may have more benefit than others. Usually, the beneficial effects of the injection will start within 1-2 weeks. In some people, these benefits may last for a year.