

Information for patients and carers

Periocular Steroid Injections

Decorative blue wavy lines at the bottom of the page, consisting of three overlapping bands of different shades of blue.

What are periocular steroid injections?

This injection procedure is usually performed for swelling or inflammation in an eye which needs to be treated.

The injection delivers the steroid at a higher dose and closer to where it is needed, compared to steroid eyedrops. Steroid medications are not licensed to be used in the eye, but many studies have shown them to be an effective and safe treatment for various eye conditions. Periocular steroid injections are used to help quickly and effectively stabilise vision for certain eye conditions and may be combined with other available treatments.

Steroid injections around the eye are used as a treatment for certain eye conditions which cause swelling/inflammation inside the eye. The medication can be injected around the eyeball, using a small needle.

The drug is not injected directly into the eye.

What is the benefit of the injection?

The dose of the steroid acts directly where it is needed. This means that you are unlikely to experience any of the usual side effects associated with oral steroids (given by mouth in tablet form), such as weight gain, increased blood pressure, osteoporosis, and the development of diabetes or stomach ulcers.

Why is it performed?

This procedure is usually performed because you have swelling or inflammation in the eye which needs to be treated. The injection delivers the steroid at a higher dose and closer to where it is needed, compared to steroid eyedrops.

What are the complications and risks involved?

- The effects of this injection are not permanent. Another injection may be required
- It may be uncomfortable but should be no worse than having an injection into the arm
- Some patients experience bleeding around the eye. This can make the eye and eyelid appear red/bruised
- Raised pressure within the eye, sometimes leading to glaucoma-damage to vision due to increased eye pressure (your pressure is checked before and then monitored after the procedure at future clinic visits)
- Early cataract formation (clouding of the lens inside the eye leading to blurred vision)
- Allergic reaction to the drug or cleaning solution used during the procedure, but this is rare
- Sometimes double vision may occur; this is usually temporary but may be permanent due to accidental injury to muscles outside the eye
- You may notice that your eyelid droops slightly following the injection, this usually resolves over time.
- Some patients develop skin thinning or changes in skin colour (whitening) around the eye
- Infection around or behind the eye
- Severe bleeding behind the eye (retrobulbar haemorrhage-this is rare and may require emergency procedure to release the pressure around the eye)
- Accidental puncture of the eyeball
- Separation of the photographic film from the back of the eye (retinal detachment)
- Injury to the nerve that takes information from the eye to the brain

- Accidental injection directly into the blood vessel around the eye
- Loss of vision- blindness (very rare but may occur due to the severity of the problem)

Preparation for the injection

You are advised to eat and drink normally prior to having the procedure.

Please take your other medications as prescribed unless you are told not to.

There are several ways to inject the steroid medicine around an eye (subconjunctival, orbital floor, sub-tenon). The procedure is usually carried out in the Outpatients Department clinic room once it is identified that you have a condition which would benefit from the injection.

- You will be asked about any allergies you might have, and we will want to know what medications you are taking
- A staff member will ask you to sign a consent form to say that you understand the procedure and that you agree to have it done
- Eye drops will be put into your eye to numb the front of your eye and to make the procedure more comfortable
- A few drops of an iodine-based antiseptic solution will be put into your eye to reduce the risk of infection
- The injection is done into the tissue around the eyeball, not directly into the eye
- Sometimes a small clamp device (speculum) may be used to help you to keep your eye open during the procedure
- The injection is usually given into the tissues in an area under your eye covered by the lower eyelid. You may experience a pricking sensation
- The injection takes a few seconds. The whole procedure from start to finish will take about 10-15 minutes

After the injection

- Your eye may feel swollen or heavy and you may experience some discomfort from the injection site, but this should pass
- Take your usual pain relief if you feel you need it
- Avoid rubbing the eye for the first hour, because it will have been desensitized by the numbing drops for a short time after the procedure
- You may be given antibiotic eye drops to be instilled into the eye that has had the procedure
- Vision may be temporarily blurred afterwards
- You should not drive immediately after the procedure and may require someone to take you home

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Lancashire Eye Centre Triage line:

Monday to Friday 09.00 till 16.30 (closed on Bank Holidays)

01257 245346.

Outside of opening hours please attend your nearest Accident and Emergency department.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

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