

Intra-articular Hip Injection

An intra-articular hip injection is a procedure used to treat hip and groin pain. Usually this pain comes from inflammation (swelling) that happens from daily “wear and tear.” In some patients, the pain is from an injury or a birth defect.

During the procedure, a mixture of a local anesthetic and a steroid is injected into the hip. The local anesthetic will numb the area, and the steroid may help lower the swelling. This should reduce your pain and improve the motion in your hip.

Does the procedure hurt?

Your doctor will inject a medication to numb the skin over your hip joint. You may feel some stinging from the needle or the numbing medication. You may also feel some pressure or an increase in your normal level of pain while the steroid is being injected. This temporary increase in pain may last for a few days after the procedure, until the steroid starts to work.

Preparing for the procedure

Once your procedure is scheduled, we will give you instructions on how to prepare. It is very important for your safety to tell us if you:

- Take a blood thinner (for example, warfarin/Coumadin, Lovenox or Plavix);
- Take anything that contains aspirin or an anti-inflammatory drug, such as ibuprofen (for example, Advil or Motrin) or naproxen (for example, Aleve);
- Have a condition that prevents your blood from clotting normally; or
- Have any allergies to latex, local anesthetics or contrast (X-ray dye).

Please plan to have someone drive you home after your procedure. If you do not, your procedure may need to be rescheduled.

What to expect

An intra-articular hip injection generally involves the steps below:

1. You will be taken to a patient waiting area. There we will check your ID band, measure your vital signs (such as your blood pressure and pulse) and ask you some basic questions about your health.
2. You will be taken into the procedure room, where your doctor will ask for your consent to do the procedure.
3. You will lie on a table. Then the area to be injected will be cleaned and covered with a special sheet. This will help keep the area free of germs.
4. Your doctor will use a special X-ray to help view the area. He or she will then numb the area with a local anesthetic.
5. Your doctor will inject contrast (a substance that will help highlight the area on X-rays). If you are allergic to contrast, your doctor will discuss your options with you before the procedure.
6. Then your doctor will inject the combined numbing and steroid medication into your joint(s).

The procedure takes about 15–20 minutes. You will be awake during the procedure and may ask questions at any time. Before you leave, we will give you instructions on how to care for yourself at home.

Possible side effects

Side effects from this procedure are rare. The most common side effect is pain where you were injected. Others include bleeding and infection.

After the procedure

- You will want to be as active as possible and do the activities that usually cause pain in your hip and/or groin after the procedure. This will help your doctor know whether your pain is caused by your hip.
- Keep track of your pain for 4 hours after your procedure. Your doctor will give you a diary to write down your pain levels and activities.
- You may feel sore for a few days after the procedure. Use an ice pack at least 3–4 times a day to feel more comfortable.
- The local anesthetic will wear off in about 4 hours. At that time, your usual level of pain may return until the steroid starts working. This can take up to 2 weeks. Keep taking pain medication, as prescribed, if you need it.
- Pain relief from a hip injection usually will last for several months, but this may vary from patient to patient. You may have 3–4 steroid injections a year. If you get no relief from the injection, we will continue to work with you to find the source of your pain and explore other treatment options.

If you have any questions, please call the Spine Center at 617-754-5246 and select option 2.