



Patient information leaflet for hyaluronic acid (HA) injection

Hyaluronic acid (HA) injections can give some reduction in pain of osteoarthritic joints. However, the improvements are usually temporary (lasting a maximum of 6-9 months). HA injections are generally very safe, although occasionally patients may experience some side effects after treatment.

The aim of this patient information leaflet is to provide you with the necessary information regarding your treatment. What are hyaluronic acid injections and how are they used? Hyaluronic acid occurs naturally within the body. The hyaluronic acid used in injections is a synthesised (man-made) version of this substance. HA injections are sometimes recommended for people with osteoarthritic conditions (wear and tear of joints), which may cause pain.

A range of hyaluronic acid injections exist. Some patients may require a series of injections and some injections can be delivered on a one-off basis. What happens when I have a hyaluronic acid injection? The clinician, who will be performing your injection, will choose the most appropriate hyaluronic acid for your condition and symptoms. They will usually inject the HA directly into the area where you have the pain, such as a joint. Most injections are quick and easy to perform. An ultrasound scan can be used to find out more about where the pain and osteoarthritis is, and also to deliver the injection more precisely.

What happens after the injection?

If you have a local anaesthetic your pain may be relieved within minutes, but the effect will usually wear off after an hour or two. It usually takes several days (even up to couple of weeks) for the effect of the HA to become apparent. You might wish to arrange alternative transport home after your injection, especially if you are having a local anaesthetic, which may cause some numbness and make it difficult to drive. If you are having an injection into a joint, you may be advised to avoid strenuous exercise for two or three days afterwards due to potential post-injection discomfort.

If you are having an injection around a tendon, you may be asked to avoid heavy impact and loading activities for a few days, again due to potential discomfort after the injection. Will I need another injection? If you find the hyaluronic acid injection helpful, and other treatments have been unsuitable or have not helped, the injection may be repeated. There is currently no research evidenced to suggest any long term harm to tissues from having repeat injections of hyaluronic acid.