

EMORY PAIN CENTER

Joint Injections

What are joint injections? Joint injections are a minimally invasive procedure used to relieve pain and inflammation in a specific joint. During the procedure, a healthcare provider injects a combination of a local anesthetic, such as lidocaine, and a corticosteroid medication into the affected joint. The injection helps reduce pain, swelling, and improve joint function.

What are the indications for joint injections? Joint injections are commonly used to treat various joint-related conditions, such as arthritis, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, bursitis, tendonitis, and synovitis. They can provide temporary relief from joint pain and stiffness, and may be recommended when other conservative treatments, such as physical therapy or oral medications, have not provided sufficient relief.

How are joint injections performed? Before the procedure, the skin around the joint will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution. The healthcare provider will use imaging guidance, such as ultrasound or fluoroscopy, to accurately locate the joint and ensure precise needle placement. Once the joint is identified, a small needle is inserted, and the medication is injected into the joint space. The injection may cause temporary discomfort or a sensation of pressure. The procedure usually takes a few minutes per joint, and multiple joints can be treated during a single session.

What are the side effects/risks of joint injections? Joint injections are generally safe, but like any medical procedure, they carry some risks. Common side effects may include temporary pain or discomfort at the injection site, bruising, or swelling. In rare cases, infection, bleeding, allergic reactions to the medication, or damage to surrounding structures may occur. It is important to discuss any concerns or potential complications with your healthcare provider before the procedure.

How effective are joint injections? The effectiveness of joint injections can vary depending on the individual, the specific joint being treated, and the underlying condition. For many patients, joint injections provide significant relief from pain and inflammation, allowing them to resume normal activities and participate in physical therapy or rehabilitation exercises. Multiple injections may be needed, depending on the severity and chronicity of the joint condition. It is important to discuss your expectations and goals with

your healthcare provider to determine if joint injections are an appropriate treatment option for you.