

Orthopaedic Procedure

Hip Joint Injection

1. What is a hip joint injection?

A hip joint injection, also known as an intra-articular hip injection, is a medical procedure in which medication, typically a combination of a local anesthetic and a corticosteroid, is injected directly into the hip joint. This procedure is performed to relieve pain and inflammation in the hip joint and assist in diagnosing the source of hip pain.

2. Causes and symptoms

- **Causes:** Hip joint injections are administered for various reasons, primarily to manage pain and inflammation. Hip pain can result from a range of conditions, including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, bursitis, tendinitis, hip labral tears, and other hip joint problems. Inflammation in the hip joint can lead to persistent pain, stiffness, and limited mobility.
- **Symptoms:** Individuals experiencing hip joint issues often complain of pain in the hip area, which may radiate down the thigh or into the groin. This pain can worsen with activities such as walking, standing, or climbing stairs. Stiffness and reduced range of motion in the hip joint are also common symptoms. Inflammation in the hip can cause swelling and discomfort, ultimately affecting an individual's daily life.

3. Treatment and procedure

- **Treatment:** Hip joint injections serve both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. The injection contains a local anesthetic for immediate pain relief and a corticosteroid to reduce inflammation in the hip joint. It can be a temporary solution for managing pain or a diagnostic tool to pinpoint the source of hip pain.
- **Procedure:** A hip joint injection is typically performed as an outpatient procedure and follows these general steps:
 1. The patient is positioned on the examination table, and the hip joint area is sterilized.
 2. A local anesthetic is administered to numb the skin and underlying tissues.
 3. Using fluoroscopy (live X-ray guidance) or ultrasound, the needle is precisely guided into the hip joint.
 4. A contrast dye is injected to confirm the needle's proper placement within the joint.
 5. The medication, a combination of a local anesthetic and corticosteroid, is then injected into the hip joint. The needle is removed, and a sterile dressing is applied to the injection site.

4. What are the potential risks?

Hip joint injections are considered relatively safe procedures, but there are potential risks and complications. These may include infection at the injection site, bleeding, or nerve damage. There is also a possibility of an allergic reaction to the injected medications. While uncommon, serious complications, such as hip joint infection, can occur.

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5. What happens after?

After a hip joint injection, patients can typically resume their regular activities. The local anesthetic provides immediate pain relief, while the corticosteroid takes a few days to reach its full effect. It's essential to monitor the hip's response to the injection and keep a record of any changes in pain or discomfort. Physical therapy may be recommended to assist in improving hip joint function. In some cases, additional injections may be necessary if pain and inflammation persist. A healthcare provider will provide post-injection care instructions and discuss any further steps in managing hip pain or identifying its underlying cause.