

What is an intra articular joint injection?

Intra articular (IA) joint injections are injections of corticosteroids and/or local anesthetics into the synovial joint space. These joints are where two bones move against each other, such as the knee, hip, shoulder, and elbow. IA injections can be done with or without ultrasound guidance. The joint space is found with palpation or ultrasound guidance and the needle is placed into the joint space. The medication is then injected.

The choice of medication will depend on the reason for the injection. If the procedure is being performed for diagnostic reasons, as if to see if another procedure would be helpful, a local anesthetic only will be injected. If the procedure is to decrease known inflammation, a corticosteroid and local anesthetic will be injected.



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Intra Articular Joint Injections



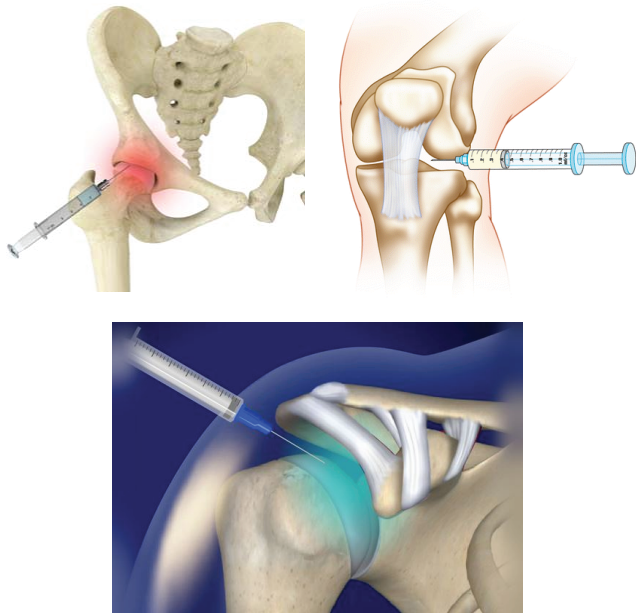
Why am I getting an intra articular joint injection?

Intra articular joint injections are given to relieve inflammation in a synovial joint. Common synovial joints that receive injections are the hip, knee, and shoulder.

Inflammation in a joint can be caused by:

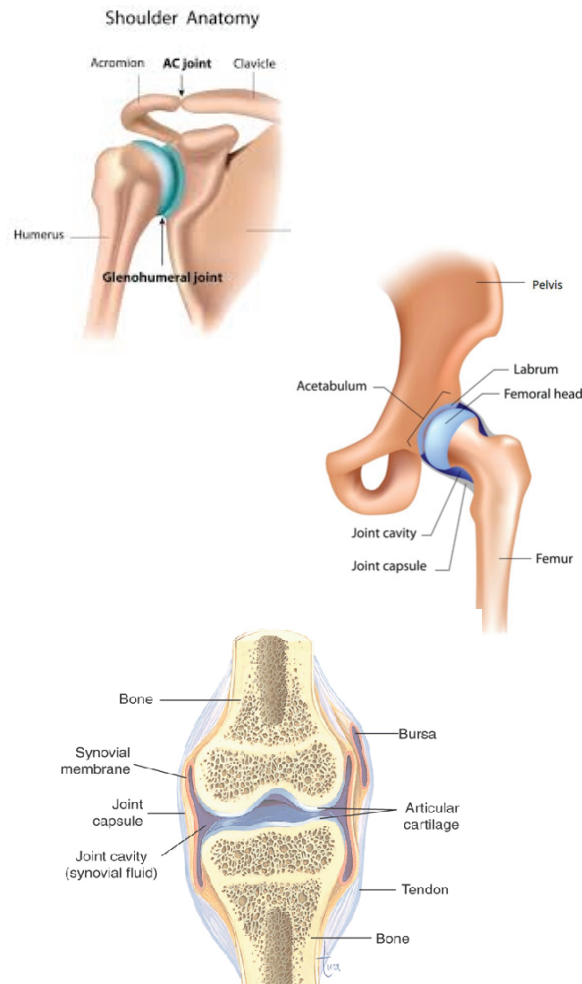
- Arthritis
- Bone spurs
- Degenerative changes in the joint
- Injury to the joint

Injections can be either diagnostic or therapeutic. Diagnostic injections will help the doctor know if another procedure would be beneficial. Therapeutic injections should help to take away the pain.



Anatomy

Joints are areas in the body where two bones meet to allow for movement. Structures like ligaments, tendons, and muscles, and other connective tissues surround joints to give them stability. These structures form the joint capsule. The space in the joint capsule between the two bones where injections are given is called the intra-articular space.



Complications

As with any procedure, complications can occur, although they are rare. Of these complications, the most common would be a temporary increase of pain near the injection site. If this occurs, apply ice to the area on the day of the procedure. If the pain persists, apply moist heat to the area. Another complication that can occur but that is rare is a headache.

Serious complications are very uncommon but may include bleeding, infection, or nerve damage. If pain continues to increase, contact your doctor. If you experience severe pain, fever, redness, or swelling around the injection site, have someone take you to the nearest emergency room to be evaluated for possible procedure complications or infection.

Expectations

The relief given by local anesthetics will wear off in several hours after the procedure. The duration of relief from the steroid varies from person to person. Expect to return to normal activities and work the day after the procedure.