

Patient information

Shoulder Hydrodilatation Arthrogram Shoulder Distention Injection

Therapies Department

Why have I been offered this treatment?

Your specialist has diagnosed a frozen shoulder, which is a painful condition that causes reduced movement of the shoulder joint.

Hydrodilatation is the procedure performed to improve joint stiffness and pain in frozen shoulder.

What is involved?

Hydrodilatation involves stretching the capsule of the joint, by injecting sterile saline, steroid and local anaesthetic into the shoulder joint under pressure. It helps break down the restricted joint capsule.

The radiologist performs the procedure in the X-ray department using X-ray guidance to ensure the injection is accurately placed.

You will be asked to lie on your back with your arm supported. Your skin will be cleaned and local anaesthetic will be given to numb the area. A mixture of saline, steroid and local anaesthetic will be injected into the shoulder.

Local anaesthetic is drug-induced numbness: it may be provided by an anaesthetist, surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used. Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side effects, as well as the effects that are needed. You may experience dizziness, blurred vision, drowsiness and occasionally loss of consciousness.

Serious side effects are rare, and include fits, low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heartbeat, which may be life-threatening. If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

A fine needle will be introduced onto the surface of the shoulder joint under X-ray guidance and a small volume of X-ray dye (iodine contrast) will be injected to ensure safe positioning. The saline, steroid and local anaesthetic will then be injected.

You do not need any sedation or general anaesthetic, but the injection can be uncomfortable. It is normal to experience a sensation of pressure and stretching in the shoulder joint and sometimes a “pop” will be experienced.

You should arrange to have someone else drive you home after the procedure, as we would advise that you do not drive or operate heavy machinery for the rest of the day following the procedure as you may not be insured by your insurance company.

Is it safe?

It is a safe procedure.

The risks and side effects are:

- Post-injection pain (up to three days).
- There is a very small risk of infection (1 in 15000).
- There is a risk that it may not work (in about 30%).
- There is a very small risk of allergy (1 in 100000).

What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?

If you choose not to proceed with a hydrodilatation, then the progress of your rehabilitation may be slower.

Please contact the X-ray department immediately if you are taking blood thinning medications e.g. Warfarin, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Rivaroxaban or Tinzaparin.

Radiology

Aintree Hospital
Tel: 0151 529 2645

Royal/Broadgreen
Tel: 0151 706 2730.

If you have diabetes, you should carefully monitor your blood sugar for the first 48 hours after the procedure as blood sugar levels and insulin requirement may rise due to the steroid.

There are no specific restrictions after the procedure.

Does it work?

Hydrodilatation injections have been shown to provide a reduction in pain, and an improvement in shoulder movement. Many people feel an immediate improvement but for some it can take weeks and months to achieve the full benefit. The majority of people report significant pain relief and improvement in shoulder movement at three months following the injection.

It is believed that pain relief occurs through the anti-inflammatory effects of the steroid and through the stretching of the joint capsule.

How will I be followed up?

Before the procedure, you should have received a telephone appointment with a physiotherapist for advice and education. They will arrange a physiotherapy appointment for you within a week of the hydrodilatation injection. If you are already under the care of the physiotherapist and are having ongoing treatment, your physiotherapist will arrange a timely follow-up appointment for you following the injection. In this case, you won't receive a telephone appointment.

Physiotherapy following the hydrodilatation injection is very important as this ensures sustained stretching of the capsule that was achieved during the procedure, and treatment and guidance to support you returning to your normal activities.

If you do not have a physiotherapy appointment arranged for following the procedure, please call to arrange a follow up appointment:

Broadgreen Hospital, Royal Liverpool Hospital or Garston

Tel: 0151 706 2760

Textphone Number: 18001 0151 706 2760

Aintree Hospital or Burlington House

Tel: 0151 529 3335

Textphone Number: 18001 0151 529 3335

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Royal and Broadgreen Hospital:

Telephone: 0151 706 2760

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2760

Aintree Hospital:

Telephone: 0151 529 3335

Text phone number: 18001 0151 529 3335

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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