

Joint Aspiration and Injection

What is a joint aspiration and injection?

Both procedures are done to help with pain and swelling in a joint.

- Joint aspiration takes fluid out of a joint. It can help the doctor determine why a joint is swollen.
- Joint injection puts a steroid or pain medicine into the joint space. It may help to improve the movement of the joint.

Special preparation

If your child will be given medicine before the procedure, follow these directions:

- No solid food 8 hours before the scan.
- No milk or formula for 6 hours before the scan.
- No breast milk for 4 hours before the scan.
- No clear liquids for 2 hours before the scan.

Please note:

If your child does not follow these instructions, and eats or drinks anything after the times listed above, **the procedure may need to be cancelled.**

How is the procedure done?

- It is done in the Interventional Radiology Department which is in the Imaging (Radiology) Department.
- If your child is unable to lie still for the exam, sedation may be needed. Our staff of nurses and providers will help you make this decision.
- There is little pain with this procedure as numbing medicine is used before the injection.
- After the skin is numb, a needle is put into the joint. The doctor may take fluid out of the joint. The fluid may be sent to the lab to be tested.
- After the fluid is removed, the doctor may inject steroid or medicine into the joint.



How long does it take?

The procedure will take about 20-45 minutes. It depends on whether sedation is needed. Your child may have to go to recovery before going home.

Are there side effects?

If medicine is given to make your child sleepy, they may:

- still be sleepy after the procedure.
- not remember the procedure.
- be upset, restless, or emotional.

It is rare to have any side effects. However, these side effects could occur:

- There may be a small amount of bleeding at the injection site.
- Sometimes the skin near the injection site can become thin, white, or dimpled. This may slowly return to normal, or it may be permanent. This does not cause pain.
- The blood supply to the bones may be interrupted. This is very rare. It could cause joint pain that may last for a long time.
- The joint may become infected. This is very, very rare. Watch for fever, redness or swelling. Call the doctor right away if these symptoms are seen.

Activities after the procedure

Your child should not run or jump for 2 days after the procedure. Quiet activities like reading or playing board games are okay. Less activity helps the medicine to work in the joint.

When will I get the test results?

If joint fluid was sent to the lab, the doctor or nurse will call you with the test results. Remember, fluid is not always removed from the joint.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- A temperature over 101°F (38.3°C).
- More pain, swelling or redness of the joint.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.