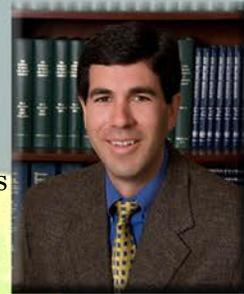


March 2015 Newsletter!



Guilford Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Center will be closed Saturday, March 14, 2015 and will re-open Monday, March 16, 2015 at 8 a.m. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Dr. Graves discusses "If Cortisone Injections are Right for You"



While performing surgery is the most enjoyable part of an orthopedist's practice, our obligation is to treat patients with the least amount of risk while trying to maximize their benefit. We present all options available to address the presenting complaint up to and including surgery. Many options are frequently discussed and one of those options is a cortisone (short for corticosteroid) injection. Corticosteroids are a class of medications which powerfully reduce inflammation and are used to treat a variety of diseases. Cortisone injections have enjoyed long-term use because of the ease of administration and tremendous success in the treatment of arthritis, tendinitis, bursitis and areas of well localized pain.

Cortisone comes in a variety of choices, many of which are available for administration into joints and soft tissues. The injections themselves are not pain relievers. When cortisone relieves pain it is because it has reduced inflammation. While this inflammation can recur, commonly the relief can last for months or years. Most often our cortisone injections are administered with a local anesthetic to minimize the pain of injection but also to provide valuable information as to whether the area being injected is the actual source of the pain. Because the local anesthetic relieves pain for 4-6 hours in the area injected, this is an important and reliable indicator that surgery will be successful if the cortisone is unsuccessful in relieving the pain long-term. So the injection not only helps minimize or eliminate pain, but also provides viable insight into the source of the pain which is very helpful in deciding whether surgery may be appropriate if the injection is unsuccessful at providing a cure.

While some injections are administered under fluoroscopic (X-Ray) or ultrasound guidance, the majority of injections are given in the office at the time of evaluation. The use of a freezing spray on the skin helps minimize the inflammation from the injection itself. It is extremely rare for a patient after an injection to state that it was more than they expected in terms of pain and frequently they are surprised at how little the injection does actually hurt.

Not uncommonly patients will feel flushed in the face or overly energetic for a short period of time after an injection, but this will pass in almost all cases. There can be depigmentation or thinning of the skin at the site of injection, but these effects are extremely rare. It is common for an injection to take up to 48 hours to see the actual benefit and it is not uncommon to see a slight flare-up of pain in the local area followed by the significant relief. Diabetics will see an increase in their blood sugars and this should be discussed prior to injection. There is certainly reason to be cautious with multiple steroid injections over time and this should be discussed as well.

It is certainly my belief that the potential benefit outweighs the risk in almost all situations. We have become extremely proficient with cortisone injections minimizing complications and maximizing success by appropriate localization of the painful process. Over time I have avoided surgery for rotator cuff inflammation, tennis elbow, plantar fasciitis and many localized pain of unknown etiology who have been greatly improved by cortisone injections. I have followed many patients for years with arthritis giving injections every 3-4 months and thus avoided joint replacements. Feel free to discuss with any of the physicians at Guilford Orthopaedics whether a cortisone injection is appropriate in the treatment of your painful condition.

Guilford Orthopaedics strives to ensure the best experience and availability to ALL our patients!



We are open Monday- Friday 8 am-5:30 pm & Saturdays from 9 am until 1 pm. Be sure to call 336-275-3325 to schedule your appointment.

If after hours please visit our Urgent Care located at 1130 N. Church Street Greensboro, NC 27401 or call 336-235-BONE(2663) they are open M-F 5:30 pm until 9 pm and Sat./Sun. 10 am until 2 pm.