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John W. McAllister, M.D.  
Paul M. Spezia, D.O.  
Theodore S. Rummel, D.O.  
Richard B. Helfrey, D.O.  
Timothy G. Graven, D.O.  
Thomas E. Albus, M.D.  
Brandon D. Larkin, M.D.  
W. Anthony Frisella, M.D.  
Marie Freise, PA-C  
Jeffery Wallace, PA-C  
Laura Horn, PA-C

## Ultrasound-Guided Shoulder Injection A Guide for Patients Dr. W. Anthony Frisella M.D. St. Peters Bone and Joint Surgery

### Why have a cortisone injection?

Many painful shoulder conditions are the result of inflammation. An inflamed shoulder causes pain, especially at night. Cortisone is a powerful anti-inflammatory medication that relieves inflammation and pain. Sometimes the inflammation goes away permanently, and the problem will be gone for good. In other cases, multiple injections may be required. If injections are not helpful, surgery may be an option.

### What is ultrasound and how does it help with injection?

Ultrasound is a tool used for looking at structures inside the body. Ultrasound itself is painless. By using ultrasound to find the correct area of the shoulder, an injection can be delivered very accurately into this area. Prior to ultrasound, injections were given "blind" and injections into muscle or bone could occur.

### Can I have too many injections?

Too many cortisone injections into one area of the body can cause thinning and weakening of the tissues. Normally, one injection every 3 months is safe. However, if multiple injections are required, surgery may be a better option for certain patients.

### Is injection painful?

The vast majority of patients find ultrasound-guided injection LESS painful than ordinary injection.

### Are there side effects?

There are very few risks or side effects. Patients with diabetes may notice a temporary increase in their blood sugar from the cortisone, which goes away after a few days. Any injection carries a small risk of infection, but it is very, very rare.

### What can I expect when I come for the injection?

The shoulder will be exposed. Women will be provided with a cape, and men will be asked to remove their shirts. Gel will be placed on the shoulder and the ultrasound probe will be used to guide the needle into the correct location. You may experience some burning during the injection. ***The whole procedure takes less than two minutes.***

### What can I expect after the injection?

For several hours your shoulder may be numb and you will feel relief. After the numbness wears off, ***you may have an increase in pain for one or two days. This is normal.*** During

this time, icing the shoulder may be helpful, and Tylenol can also be used. The cortisone should begin to work after three or four days.

**How long will the injection last?**

Most people will have many months of relief and in many cases the problem will go away permanently. Still other people will have minimal or no relief. If the injection lasts only a short time, surgery may be a better option.

**What other options are there?**

For most people, treatment options are: 1) injection; 2) physical therapy; 3) anti-inflammatories; and 4) surgery. Surgery might be an option if other treatments do not work and the problem does not resolve with time.