Therapeutic Joint and Bursa Injections

What is a Therapeutic Injection?
Fluoroscopy is a special form of X-ray that produces real-time video images, as opposed to pictures on film, making it possible to see internal organs and joints in motion. A joint or bursa injection is a fluoroscopic diagnostic and therapeutic procedure whereby a steroid medication is injected into the joint or bursa to reduce inflammation and, hopefully, alleviate pain.

CPT Codes
20610 Shoulder, Hip, Knee
20605 Wrist
77002 Fluoroscopic Guidance
J3301 Steroid (Usually Marcaine)

Indications
Joint and bursal-related pain including some of these common maladies: trochanteric bursitis, pes anserine bursitis, prepatellar bursitis, leg length abnormalities, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, pain and disability from iliotibial band syndrome.

Contraindications
Pregnancy, acute fracture, joint prosthesis, inaccessible joints, lack of response after three to four injections.

How Does Your Patient Prepare?
Patients on Coumadin should talk to a Radiology Nurse prior to stopping medication. Patients having a hip injection are required to have a driver.

What Happens During the Test?
The nurse will obtain a patient history. The patient will be positioned face-up on the exam table, and the technologist will sterilize the area around the site to be injected. The radiologist will numb the area with a local anesthetic. Fluoroscopy will be used to direct a small needle into the joint. A small mixture of anesthetic and cortisone is then slowly injected into the joint. Patients may or may not notice pain relief in the first few hours after an injection. The injection itself only takes a few minutes, but the overall procedure takes approximately 30 minutes.

After the Procedure
The patient may resume normal diet, medication and exercise routines. The patient may experience some discomfort after the procedure and if so, should not perform any heavy lifting or rigorous activity for 24 hours.

The Results
A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within one business day.

(Information adapted from American Family Physician and Dr. James Choi)

This information is intended for use as merely a guideline for referring physicians and their staff members only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Shawnee Mission Medical Center Radiology does not recommend any particular examination.
Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders:
CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.