

# MRI arthrogram of joint

Information and advice for patients

## *Imaging*

### **What is an MRI arthrogram of joint?**

An MRI arthrogram involves an injection of special contrast dye and local anaesthetic into a joint to diagnose your condition and/or give you symptom relief.

This type of MRI is usually done on the wrist, shoulder or hip joints.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefit is that it should help your symptoms for a period of time. It will also confirm any possible diagnosis and plan further appropriate treatment.

### **What are the risks?**

Feeling faint or dizzy are probably the most common risks. This happens to about 1 in 50 patients. Bruising occurs in about 1 in 100 patients. Infection and allergic reactions are very rare and occur in less than 1 in 1000 patients.

### **What are the risks of not having the injection?**

We may not be able to give you a diagnosis for your symptoms which can cause delay for any treatment required.

### **Are there any alternatives to this injection?**

A normal MRI is an alternative test but is not as accurate as an MRI arthrogram. Certain structures in the joint cannot be seen clearly without the arthrogram.

### **Preparing for the injection**

No specific preparation is required beforehand. You can eat normally and should take any normal medications that are prescribed to you.

It is important that we ask you some questions before an injection is given. If your answer is yes, it is important that you tell us.

- Do you have any current infection, especially at the site where the injection will be given?
- Are you taking Warfarin or any other blood thinning medication?
- Are you diabetic?
- Do you have any allergies, especially to local anaesthetic?
- Are you required to be at work in the next 4 days?
- Will your work involve heavy physical activity in the next 4 days?

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### **During the injection**

Before the test you will be met by staff in the MRI department who will ask you to change into a gown. You will be later met by a radiographer and radiologist (the doctor performing the injection). You will be asked to give verbal consent.

The procedure involves injection of local anaesthetic around and into the joint. There will also be 2 types of dye used with the injection. These will allow the radiologist to know that the injection which is performed under x-ray guidance, is in the correct place. The other dye will help show up important structures on the MRI scan.

You may feel some stinging or discomfort when the local anaesthetic is injected. There will probably be some numbness, pins needles or heaviness around the joint injected.

The procedure lasts a few minutes and you will usually be in the MRI scanner for 20 - 30 minutes.

### **After the injection**

After the injection, the injected joint or area may be numb for a few hours.

If you need to take simple pain killers e.g. paracetamol then do so if needed. Sometimes moving the area can help. You can also place an ice pack on the joint affected for a few minutes. You can usually go home straight after having the injection.

If you have urgent concerns please see your GP or attend the Emergency Department.

### **Going home**

It is essential that you do not operate any dangerous machinery. You should not drive for the rest of the day so please make arrangements for going home. We also advise you not to carry heavy loads for the next 3-4 days. After this period you can then resume normal activities.

### **Follow-up**

The clinician who requested the MRI arthrogram will contact you with the results. You may need to discuss the results in the outpatient clinic with regard to future treatment options.

### **Symptoms to report**

Skin redness, significant swelling or pain around the site of injection that are getting progressively worse over 48 hrs are signs of possible infection.

Shortness of breath, dizziness, feeling faint or developing a rash could indicate an allergic reaction to some of the dye injected into the joint.

If you have urgent concerns please see your GP or attend Accident & Emergency.

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### Contact details

If you have any questions, please contact us on:

Tel: 0121 507 2405 (City Hospital)  
0121 507 3695 (Sandwell Hospital)  
Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm

### Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Patient.co.uk professional reference, 'Joint Injection and Aspiration', May 2012

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5303 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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