



RANZCR Statement on Steroid Injections and the COVID-19 Vaccine

There is currently limited scientific evidence upon which to base recommendations regarding the optimal timing of image guided epidural, other spinal or musculoskeletal corticosteroid injections relative to COVID - 19 vaccination in order to prevent diminished immune response to vaccines.

While the theoretical risks of diminished immune response to vaccination appear to be low, these estimates are largely based upon studies of other vaccines and other routes of corticosteroid administration.

It may be appropriate, based on these theoretical risks, to delay COVID - 19 vaccination for a period after corticosteroid injection and to delay corticosteroid injection for a period after vaccination³.

Each patient's situation is unique. Referring clinicians and radiologists should exercise clinical judgement in weighing the severity of the patient's symptoms, the urgency of treatment, alternatives to corticosteroid injection, and the patient's overall clinical situation against the small, theoretical, but unproven, risks of corticosteroid injection.

The following consensus-based guidelines from the Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA), the NHS, the USA Spine Intervention Society and a peer-reviewed consensus paper from pain medicine specialists in the United States may be helpful to practitioners in this regard:

1. PATIENT INFORMATION - ARA:

[ARA COVID-19 Vaccination for People with autoimmune inflammatory rheumatic diseases](#)

This document discusses COVID -19 vaccination in the context of other immunosuppressive treatments for rheumatological / autoimmune disorders but advice about corticosteroid injections is not provided.

2. PATIENT INFORMATION - NHS:

[The Oxford University Hospitals NHS FAQs about steroid injections during the pandemic](#) states the following:

"Will the steroid injection affect how well my COVID vaccine will work?

Currently there is no evidence to suggest that a steroid injection to a joint or soft tissue will reduce the effectiveness of a COVID vaccine. For a non-essential steroid injection, it should be delayed for 2 weeks after the vaccination. This can be arranged in discussion with the clinician planning the injection. "

3. SPINE INTERVENTION SOCIETY- [Consensus Document](#)

4. PEER - REVIEWED OPEN ACCESS PAIN MEDICINE SPECIALIST VIEWPOINT:

Chakravarthy K, Strand N, Frosch A, et al. Recommendations and Guidance for Steroid Injection Therapy and COVID-19 Vaccine Administration from the American Society of Pain and Neuroscience (ASPN). *J Pain Res.* 2021;14:623-629. Published 2021 Mar 5. doi:10.2147/JPR.S302115

RANZCR is currently seeking advice from the Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) and Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) about image-guided corticosteroid injections and COVID-19 vaccination timing. This advice will be provided to members as soon as it becomes available.