

REFERRER INFORMATION – July 2021

Guidance for steroid injection therapy and COVID-19 vaccine administration

Following the COVID-19 vaccine rollout SER has updated its policy regarding steroid injection therapy in line with best available evidence. There is currently no direct evidence to suggest that a corticosteroid injection before or after the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine decreases the efficacy of the vaccine. However, based on the known timeline of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis suppression following spinal and musculoskeletal corticosteroid injections, and the timeline of the reported peak efficacy of vaccines, physicians should consider timing an elective corticosteroid injection such that it is administered no less than two weeks prior to a COVID-19 vaccine dose and no less than two weeks following a COVID-19 vaccine dose, whenever possible.

KEY POINTS

- There is no evidence that patients receiving steroid therapy for the management of pain are at increased risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 vaccination;
- Synthesis of available information indicates that there is a suspected immunosuppressive effect in the majority of individuals who receive a corticosteroid injection, greatest at one week, and to a lesser extent at two weeks following injection;
- We recommend a shared decision-making process with each unique patient in the context of his or her for injection, as well as risk factors for a reduced adaptive immune response to vaccine exposure and risks for morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19;
- These recommendations may change as more direct evidence regarding the effect of corticosteroid injection on COVID-19 vaccine efficacy becomes available

SER BOOKING POLICY

- Steroid injection therapy to continue during the COVID-19 vaccination roll out;
- Depending on symptom severity it is recommended that corticosteroid is administered:
 - no less than two weeks prior to a COVID-19 vaccination;
 - no less than two weeks following a COVID-19 vaccination;
- If severity of symptoms warrants steroid injection therapy within this timeframe, then there is currently insufficient evidence to recommend against this;
- Prior to steroid injection therapy all patients will be provided with a safety information sheet and asked to sign a consent form prior to procedure.

Please contact your local SER practice if you would like to speak to a Radiologist for further information or advice

References

1. Chakravarthy K, Strand N, Frosch A, Sayed D, Narra LR, Chaturvedi R, Grewal PK, Pope J, Schatman ME, Deer T. 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 <https://doi.org/10.2147/JPR.S302115>
2. Lee H, Punt J, Miller D, et al. Do Corticosteroid Injections for the Treatment of Pain Influence the Efficacy of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines? *Spine Intervention Society.* Feb 2012. <https://www.spineintervention.org/page/FactFinders>