



Hyaluronic Acid Injections

Hyaluronic acid injections (Durlolane or Synvisc), also known as viscosupplementation injections, are used for the treatment of knee, hip, shoulder, elbow and ankle osteoarthritis. Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring molecule that is normally present in healthy cartilage. In unhealthy or arthritic cartilage, the levels of hyaluronic acids are lower. These injections can help control pain, provide lubrication, and replace hyaluronic acid in the joint. The injection also stimulates your joint to make more of this important molecule. These injections can successfully improve symptoms in three-quarters of patients (75%). The benefit of these injections is temporary and typically lasts from 2 – 6 months. Hyaluronic Acid injections work best in mild to moderate arthritis.

The injection procedure is covered by Alberta Health Care, but the cost of the hyaluronic acid product is not. A receipt and prescription will be provided to you in the event that this cost is covered by your supplementary health insurance plan. We perform knee, elbow and ankle injections in our clinics, but hip and shoulder joint injections must be performed under x-ray or ultrasound guidance at a clinic in Calgary or Canmore.

RISKS OF DURLOANE/SYNVISC INJECTION

Your doctor will inject you with viscosupplementation when the benefits of viscosupplementation are thought to outweigh the minimal risks.

Pain, Swelling and/or Stiffness: Transient pain, swelling and/or stiffness, as well as warmth or redness localized to the joint may last for three to seven days after the injection.

Post-injection Inflammatory Reaction: This is an uncommon reaction, which may occur after a hyaluronic acid injection. This reaction occurs within 24-hours of the injection and is characterized by increased swelling and pain in the injected joint. There is usually no redness of the overlying skin, although the joint may feel warm. Icing the area for up to 20 minutes at a time using an ice pack covered with towel can be helpful; do not apply ice directly to your skin. Tylenol (acetaminophen) or an anti-inflammatory such as Advil® (ibuprofen) can be used to help control the pain. If the pain and swelling lasts longer than 3 days, notify your doctor. This is not an allergic reaction and does not preclude the use of the same product in the future.

Infection: The risk of infection is extremely low. Studies have indicated that the risk of infection after this injection is 1/10,000 injections. Signs of infection include a fever and/or chills, and pain, warmth and redness around the area of the injection. Symptoms of an infection could occur up to 10-days after the injection. If you develop these symptoms please call our office, or the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital, or go to the nearest urgent care or emergency clinic and tell them that you had a viscosupplementation injection.

Allergic Reaction: Please notify your doctor if you are allergic to poultry products, feathers or meat. This will affect which product you may use, as these particular allergies are only a concern when using Synvisc but not Durolane. However, you can still have an allergic reaction to Synvisc or Durolane regardless of whether or not you have other allergies. If you have had any allergic reactions to viscosupplementation in the past, please notify your doctor prior to your injection.

Other Adverse Effects: Other potential short and long term adverse effects include but are not limited to: headache, dizziness, rashes, bleeding, nerve or blood vessel injury.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor. If you have persistent swelling or pain, fever or chills, or if you notice a significant change in your well-being, please contact the clinic office at (403) 760-2897 or the Banff Mineral Springs Hospital (403) 762-2222.