

# Corticosteroid injections for osteoarthritis of the knee

Numbers for adults 43 years and older with osteoarthritis of the knee who received either a placebo or a corticosteroid injection in the impaired knee.

	<b>1,000 patients with placebo injections</b>	<b>1,000 patients with corticosteroid injections</b>
<b>Benefits*</b>		
How many patients experienced a reduction in pain?	310	440
How many patients experienced improved function of the knee joint?	260	360
How many patients reported an increased quality of life 4 to 6 weeks after the injection?		no difference
<b>Harms**</b>		
How many patients experienced side effects after the injection (joint pain and stiffness)?		130-150 no difference
How many patients suffered severe side effects resulting in persistent disability, hospitalization, or death (e.g. joint pain, pneumonia, gastroenteritis)?		3-4 no difference

\*The numbers are based on low-quality evidence that may lead to an overestimation of benefits. In addition, results of the individual studies are contradictory. \*\*It is not known how many patients would have suffered side effects if no placebo injections had been given.

**Short summary:** Corticosteroid injections led to moderate reduction in pain and slight improvement in function of the knee joint. Side effects occurred equally often for both placebo and corticosteroid injections. However, no reliable data for this are available.

Source: Jüni et al. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2015(10):CD005328.

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