
Children's Arthritis Treatment Information

Intravenous Methylprednisolone Pulse

Treatment Information

Methylprednisolone is a type of glucocorticosteroid. Steroids occur naturally in the body and are important for a number of bodily functions. Steroids are powerful anti-inflammatory drugs that are used to help control active arthritis. They help reduce inflammation. This in turn reduces the pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints.

How will my treatment be given?

Initially you will be given methylprednisolone as a single dose by a drip into an arm. This can be repeated for 3 consecutive days depending on the response to the treatment and the activity of your arthritis.

A small plastic tube (a venflon) is inserted into a vein in the back of the hand or forearm. This is attached to a solution containing the steroid and given over approximately 1 hour. This is called a pulse. You may need to stay in hospital during this time for other treatment e.g. physiotherapy or you may be allowed to go home between treatments. The venflon is usually left in the vein for the three days so care must be taken not to knock it or get it wet.

Prior to the treatment blood samples may be taken and your temperature, pulse and blood pressure will be checked. Your blood pressure and pulse will be checked during, at the end of the pulse and then 1-hour afterwards. You may be able to go home after this as long as there are no side effects.

How quickly will I notice an improvement?

The response is rapid and generally lasts for approximately 3 weeks. This does vary between individuals; some people continue to feel benefit for a number of weeks or occasionally months. During this time your disease modifying medication should be starting to control your symptoms.

Are there any side effects?

As with all medication some people may experience side effects. In particular you should be aware of the following:

- A small number of patients suffer from hyperactivity, mood changes and sleep disturbance for a short period of time

Rheumatology department Patient Information

- Facial flushing
- Metallic taste in the mouth
- In girls the monthly period may be heavy or irregular for a month or so

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

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Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice