



Suffolk Podiatry

Steroid Injections & Surgery

Many foot conditions can be effectively treated by buying an insole, changing footwear or in some cases by using stretching or strengthening techniques to aid recovery. However, if symptoms do not improve after 6 months, it might be possible to undergo more invasive treatments like steroid injections or surgery, depending on the condition.

Suffolk Podiatry does not provide these treatments, but your GP can refer you to your local foot surgery team for assessment, via the MSK single point of access pathway.

What to consider before seeing a Foot Surgeon

Before being considered for any invasive procedures, patients are required to try non-surgical care for a minimum of 6 months. If you are a smoker, you are strongly advised to quit as it can lead to poorer outcomes from invasive procedures.

Non-surgical options to try before considering referral for steroid injection or surgery:

- Footwear change
- Changing lifestyle and activities (keeping to a healthy Body Mass Index)
- Use of pain relief
- Insoles/splints/padding

Referral for possible surgery should only be considered as a last resort.

Steroid Injection

Steroid (corticosteroid) injections are anti-inflammatory medicines used to treat a range of conditions in the foot such as joint pain and arthritis. Steroid injections can have complications and should only be considered if you have tried other non-surgical options first.

Surgery:

Surgery should only be considered if you are experiencing severe pain, extreme difficulty with finding shoes to fit (due to foot deformity) or significant limitations with your daily living activities due to your foot/ankle condition.

You will only be considered for surgery if you have tried non-surgical options first – usually for at least 6 months.



What should I expect from a steroid injection?

Steroid injections take place in outpatient clinics and you should be able to go home after your injection.

Injections can take a few days to start working but some work in a few hours. The effect usually wears off after a few months.

After a steroid injection, you will not be able to drive yourself home and it is advised that you rest for 2 – 4 days afterwards although you may not need to take time off work.

What should I expect from surgery?

Surgical procedures may take place either in an outpatient clinic or the main hospital and do not normally require you to stay in hospital overnight, although in some instances this may be necessary. You are likely to need significant time off work and away from your usual activities, including driving, during your recovery period. Procedures are usually carried out under regional anaesthesia meaning you will not need to be unconscious. A series of injections are administered around the ankle, toe or knee depending on the type of surgery undertaken.

Things to consider for after your surgery:

- After your surgery, you will need a competent adult with you for the rest of the day and night after surgery.
- For the first 1 – 2 weeks you should rest completely only moving to the bathroom and back.
- You may be required to wear a plaster cast or air-cast boot for many weeks. You may be required to walk with the aid of crutches.
- You may not be able to drive for 6 – 8 weeks after surgery and you are likely to be off work for up to 12 weeks, especially if your work is manual.



(The above advice may differ depending on your circumstances and the type of treatment that has been recommended – always follow the advice of your surgical team.)

There are always risks associated with surgical procedures such as infection, blood clots or poor healing. The surgery team will discuss this with you.

It may be up to 12 months before you feel the full benefit of any surgical procedure.

If you have any further queries about possible treatments, please talk to your GP or other Health Care Professional.

Suffolk Podiatry
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