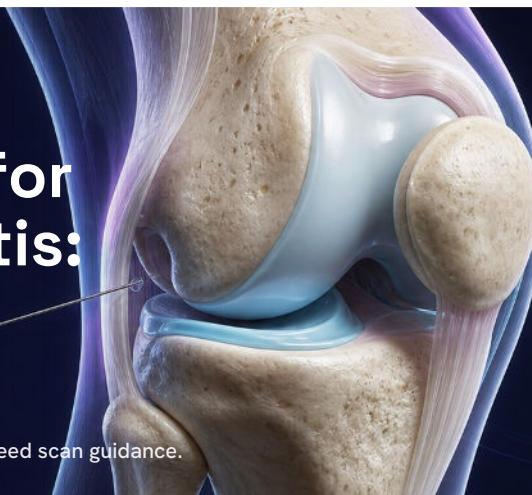


PLAIN-ENGLISH PATIENT GUIDE

Joint injections for hip & knee arthritis: what should you know?

Most research is about knee arthritis. Hip injections need scan guidance.



**An injection can calm a joint.
No injection can repair worn cartilage.**

The aim is temporary relief so you can keep moving.

Cortisone injection

Fast relief, but temporary.

HELPS PAINFUL FLARES - NOT A LONG-TERM PLAN

- What it is: a strong anti-inflammatory medicine placed inside the joint.
- What to expect: it may start helping within a few days. Relief usually lasts for weeks, not years.
- Best use: settling a painful flare so you can sleep, move and take part in exercise treatment.
- Why not repeat it often? frequent injections may speed up cartilage wear. Repeated injections are not a long-term plan.
- Possible problems: infection is rare but serious. Pain may flare for 1-2 days. Blood sugar may rise for a few days in people with diabetes.

Common brands include Celestone, Kenacort and Depo-Medrol.

Gel injection

A synthetic form of a substance found in healthy joint fluid.

MAY HELP SOME PEOPLE - DOES NOT REGROW CARTILAGE

- What is the gel? It is a laboratory-made version of one of the slippery substances in healthy joint fluid. The gel acts like a lubricant and cushion.
- What to expect: if it helps, the effect is usually slower than cortisone. Improvement may build over several weeks and may last for months.
- Important: it does not grow new cartilage or reverse arthritis. Australian guidance does not recommend gel injections routinely because the average benefit is small.
- Who might discuss it? someone with mild or moderate arthritis who has tried exercise and simple medicines, and understands that it may not help.
- Cost: some Adelaide providers bulk bill Euflexxa gel injections for eligible Medicare patients. Other products or providers may charge a private fee.

Common gel brands include Euflexxa, Synvisc-One, Durolane and Monovisc. Check the exact product and total cost before booking.

The newer injections

Ask what is being injected, why it is being offered, how it will be guided and what it will cost.

Platelet-rich plasma

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR KNEE ARTHRITIS

This injection is made from your own blood. In the best Australian trial, it did not improve pain or protect cartilage better than a salt-water injection after 12 months. The current Australian arthritis standard says it should not be offered for knee arthritis. A common private price is \$300-\$800 for each injection.

Stem-cell injection

UNPROVEN - USE ONLY IN A REGISTERED TRIAL

Stem-cell injections have not been shown to regrow cartilage in an arthritic joint. Australia's medicines regulator warns that unproven cell treatments may be costly and may cause serious harm. Advertised treatment courses can cost more than \$5,000.

What may be bulk billed in Adelaide?

Billing rules and patient eligibility can change. Always ask the radiology provider to confirm the total cost before booking.

Cortisone injection

Often bulk billed when the patient has a valid referral and the service is covered by Medicare. Confirm with the provider.

Euflexxa gel injection

Bulk billing is available from some Adelaide providers. Jones Radiology states that eligible Medicare card holders can have the medicine and computed-tomography-guided procedure bulk billed.

Other gel brands

May have a private medicine or procedure fee. Ask which brand is planned and request the full price.

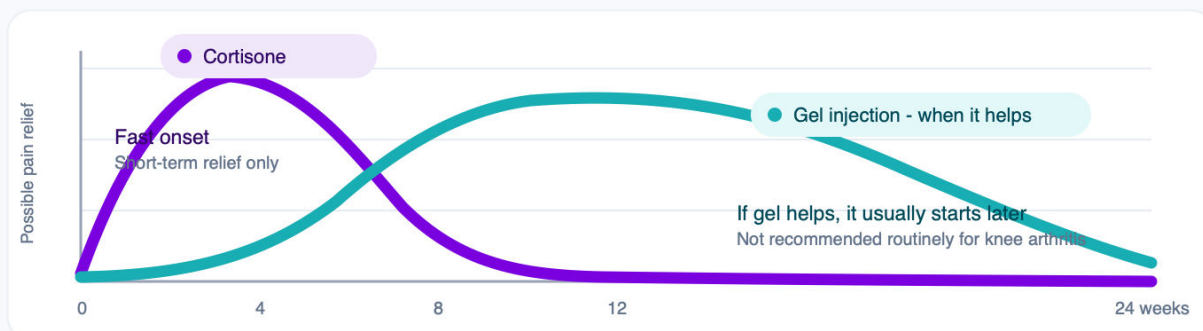
Platelet-rich plasma and stem cells

Usually private treatments. Platelet-rich plasma commonly costs \$300-\$800 per injection. Stem-cell treatment may cost more than \$5,000.

Euflexxa programs commonly use 3 injections. Some providers require a separate referral for each appointment.

When symptom relief may be felt

A simple guide to timing - every person is different



This chart is a timing guide. It cannot promise that an injection will help you.

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Hot, red joint or fever

Infection is rare but serious.
Seek urgent medical review.



Short-lived flare

Pain can increase briefly.
Often settles in 1-2 days.



Diabetes check

Cortisone may temporarily
raise blood sugar.



Replacement planned?

No cortisone in that joint
within 3 months of surgery.

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The 3-month rule

Planning a hip or knee replacement? Do not have cortisone injected into that joint within 3 months of surgery. An injection in this period may increase the chance of a serious infection around the new joint. Tell your surgeon what was injected, which joint was treated and the date.

When an injection is no longer the right answer

Arrange a proper review if pain still wakes you at night, an X-ray shows severe arthritis, each injection helps less than the last, or the joint truly locks or gives way. A review is a conversation about your options - not a commitment to surgery.

Before booking, ask these 3 questions

1. What exactly will be injected?
2. Is the whole course bulk billed?
3. Do I need one referral or a separate referral for every appointment?

General information only. Make decisions with your general practitioner or specialist. Reviewed July 2026.

