



# PATIENT FACT SHEET

## Hyaluronic Acid



### WHAT IS IT?

**Hyaluronic acid injections are used to treat osteoarthritis of the knee.** It is recommended if the patient wants to postpone joint replacement surgery or when other treatment options are not effective, such as anti-inflammatory pain medications, acetaminophen (TYLENOL), physical therapy, weight loss and corticosteroid injections.

Hyaluronan is a substance normally found in the joint

fluid which acts as a lubricant and shock absorber and helps the joint to move smoothly. In an arthritic knee, the quality and quantity of hyaluronan in the joint fluid is reduced. Your doctor can inject hyaluronic acid into the knee to supplement the naturally occurring hyaluronic acid which may help provide temporary pain relief. The injections may only help with the pain but does not reverse or prevent the joint damage.

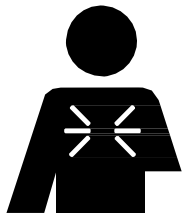


### HOW TO TAKE IT

**Hyaluronic acid will be injected into the knee joint after draining fluid from it in the doctor's office.** There are many different brands of hyaluronic acid available. While they differ in some ways, none has been shown to work better or worse than another. Depending on which brand is being used, the injections are given weekly for one to five weeks. It may take more than one injection for the pain to go away.

Your doctor will check your progress closely to see if the

medicine is working and decide if you should continue to receive it. The response that patients have to these injections is variable. For patients who have pain relief, it may take a few days to several weeks to notice an improvement. How long the relief lasts also varies. Some patients can have relief in pain for a few months. If the injections are helpful, then they can be repeated in 6 months.



### SIDE EFFECTS

**The most common side effects after a hyaluronic acid injection include local reaction with pain, warmth, swelling and difficulty moving the knee immediately after the shot.** These symptoms generally do not last long and applying ice helps ease the pain. Do not strain your knee by standing for long periods of time or participating in activities like running, jogging or heavy lifting for one to two days after receiving hyaluronic acid. Call your doctor if the pain or swelling in the knee persists or becomes worse.

Other less common side effects include bleeding, blistering, burning, coldness, discoloration of skin, feeling of pressure, hives, joint infection, inflammation, itching, lumps, numbness, pain, rash, redness, scarring, soreness, stinging, swelling, tenderness, tingling, ulceration and warmth at the injection site.



### TELL YOUR DOCTOR

**You should notify your doctor if you experience any side effects or allergic reactions.** Tell your doctor if you experience bleeding problems. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, let your doctor know before starting this

medication. The risk in pregnancy and breastfeeding has not been determined. If you develop an infection in the knee or a skin problem in the area where the injection is given, tell your doctor.

*Written June 2018 by Mamatha Katikanen, MD and reviewed by the American College of Rheumatology Committee on Communications and Marketing. This information is provided for general education only. Individuals should consult a qualified health care provider for professional medical advice, diagnosis and treatment of a medical or health condition.*