

# Piriformis Steroid Injection

This handout answers some of the most common questions patients have about piriformis steroid injections. If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to call the **Spine Center at 401-793-9121.**

## What is a piriformis injection?

A piriformis injection is used to treat pain in the buttock area. During the procedure, a steroid (medication used to reduce swelling) is injected into the piriformis muscle.

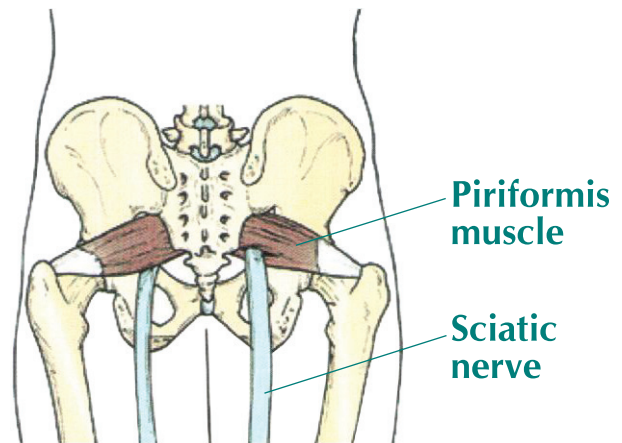
This muscle travels behind the hip joint and over the buttocks. It helps turn your leg and foot outward by rotating the hip joint. Sometimes the piriformis muscle can become irritated, swollen and tight due to injury and spasm. It can also push on the nearby sciatic nerve. This can cause hip and buttock pain that can extend down the leg.

By reducing swelling, the piriformis injection should decrease the pressure on your nerves and lessen your pain. This may allow your muscle to heal, especially with physical therapy.

## Does the procedure hurt?

During the procedure, we will inject you with a local anesthetic. This will numb the area where the steroid will be injected. You may feel some temporary stinging from the needle or the anesthetic.

You may also feel some pressure or a temporary increase in your normal level of pain during the procedure. This temporary increase in pain may last for a few days after the procedure until the steroid starts to work.



## Do I have to do anything to prepare for the procedure?

Once your procedure is scheduled, we will give you instructions on how to prepare. For your safety, please tell us if you:

- Take a blood thinner (for example, warfarin/ Coumadin, Lovenox, or Plavix),
- Take any aspirin products or anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen (for example, Advil or Motrin) or naproxen (for example, Aleve),
- Have a condition that prevents your blood from clotting normally, or
- Have any allergies to latex, local anesthetics, X-ray dye.

Please plan to have someone drive you home after your procedure. **If you do not, your procedure may be canceled.**



**Rhode Island Hospital**  
*A Lifespan Partner*

## What happens during the procedure?

The procedure generally involves these steps:

1. You will be taken to a patient waiting area. There we will check your ID band, measure your vital signs (such as your blood pressure and pulse) and ask you some basic questions about your health.
2. Then you will be taken to the procedure room. Your doctor will ask for your consent to do the procedure.
3. You will lie on a table. The area to be treated will be cleaned and covered with a special sheet. This will help keep the area free of germs.
4. Your doctor will use a special X-ray to help view the area. He or she will then numb the area with a local anesthetic.
5. Your doctor may inject contrast (to help highlight the area on X-rays). If you are allergic to contrast, your doctor will discuss your options with you before the procedure.
6. Then your doctor will inject the steroid into the piriformis muscle.

The procedure usually takes about 10 minutes. You will be awake during the procedure and may ask questions at any time. Before you leave, we will give you instructions on how to care for yourself at home.

## Are there any complications from the procedure?

Complications from this procedure are rare. Possible side effects include:

- Tenderness, bruising or bleeding at the injection site
- Infection
- Nerve injury
- Increased pain in your normal painful area(s)
- Allergic reaction to the medications used

## How will I feel after the procedure?

- You may be sore for a few days after the procedure. Use an ice pack on the injection site for 15-20 minutes at least 4 times a day for several days. Before using the ice, wrap it in a towel so it does not touch your skin.
- You may continue to have your usual level of pain until the steroid starts to work. This can take up to 2 weeks. Take over-the-counter pain medicine or muscle relaxants as recommended by your doctor.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for physical therapy. You may need to meet with your physical therapist soon after the injection to further reduce pain in your muscle.
- Pain relief from a piriformis injection usually will last for several months, but this may differ from patient to patient. You may have 3-4 steroid injections a year. If you get no relief from the steroid, we will continue to look for the source of your pain and explore other treatment options with you.

**For more information, please call the Spine Center at 401-793-9121.**