

## What is Hyaluronic Acid?

In a healthy joint, a thick fluid called synovial fluid provides lubrication, allowing bones to glide against one another. Synovial fluid acts as a shock absorber. In people with osteoarthritis, a critical substance in synovial fluid known as hyaluronic acid breaks down.

Hyaluronic acid is similar to a substance that occurs naturally in the joints. It works by acting as a lubricant and shock absorber in the joints and helps the joints work smoothly.

## How does Hyaluronic Acid work?

When you have osteoarthritis (OA), there is hyaluronic acid in the affected joint thins. Hyaluronic acid injections add to your body's natural supply and thus replenish the fluid that was lost or diminished. It acts as a lubricant and decreases friction in the affected joints. The areas that are often affected are the knees, hips, shoulders, elbows, and ankles.

## Who is a potential candidate for this treatment?

- Mild to moderate osteoarthritis
- Pain that affects daily activities, such as extended standing and walking
- Sensitive to anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen, or they do not provide adequate relief
- Do not get adequate pain relief from joint aspirations (fluid removal)
- Do not get adequate pain relief from steroid injections, or want to avoid steroid injections
- Want to avoid or postpone surgery



## WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

- ❖ Surgery
- ❖ Anti-inflammatory drug therapy
- ❖ Steroid injections
- ❖ Physiotherapy (In conjunction with other therapies)
- ❖ PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma)
- ❖ Prolotherapy
- ❖ Fluid Aspiration (Removal of inflammatory fluid from your joint)

If you require further information about risks or complications, please discuss with the doctors in clinic or on admission.



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## HYALURONIC ACID(HA)



This pamphlet contains the following information:

General Background Information

What to expect

Preparation

Side Effects & Complications



## How long will the procedure take?

The procedure usually takes about 5-30 minutes and is done using an ultrasound machine for a more accurate administration.

## How long will it take to see improvement?

The injections should work within days if they're effective and they'll most likely last for a 3-8 months. Your doctor may recommend you have repeat courses if necessary.

The particles in hyaluronic acid are quite large, so they'll stay in your joint for some time before they will be reabsorbed into your body.

## What are the potential benefits of the treatment?

The main benefit of the treatment is an improvement in pain, better joint movement, and/or slowed progression of osteoarthritis.

## What are the possible side effects or complications of this procedure?

Risks and complications are rare with this procedure, but you should be aware of them before the start of the treatment. They include:

- ❖ Infection at the site of the injection. The procedure is sterile; thus, this complication is very rare.
- ❖ An increase in inflammation and pain at the site of the injection, could last up to 3 days.
- ❖ No relief or worsening of symptoms.
- ❖ Allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic drug or other components.
- ❖ Failure to achieve successful result, this treatment does not work for everyone.
- ❖ When ultrasound guided, the risk of injury to the nerves or blood vessels is very low.
- ❖ In rare cases, prolonged stiffness and/or pain.

## Following the Hyaluronic Acid Injection

- ❖ Try to minimize activities that strain the effected joint for at least 48 hours following the injection.
- ❖ Avoid high-impact activities (for example: tennis and running). You could try activities such as swimming, or walking, which are great forms of low impact exercise.
- ❖ Maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight strains your knees and/or other joints effected.
- ❖ Use heat and ice to soothe pain and/or discomfort.
- ❖ Try elastic tensor bandage around injection site post procedure.
- ❖ Try wearing a brace or assistive devices, such as a cane, if necessary.
- ❖ Consider physical therapy or a personalized exercise program with someone who is knowledgeable about osteoarthritis. HA is a good aid to assist you with your rehab program.

