Long Head of Biceps Tendon: Ultrasound Guided Injection

Information for you
What have I injured?
The long head of biceps is a tendon situated at the front of your shoulder. It is surrounded by a sheath which helps reduce friction to the tendon when you lift your arm above your head. Sometimes this tendon is injured or the sheath becomes swollen and this can cause pain that restricts normal daily activities.

Why do I need a corticosteroid injection?
A corticosteroid injection can help to relieve pain, swelling and stiffness. It does not go into your stomach and causes less side effects than non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication taken by mouth, for example, ibuprofen.

The injection helps the shoulder surgeon to decide if surgery is required.

How is the injection done?
The skin is cleaned with antiseptic. The injection is delivered into the sheath, not the tendon. An ultrasound machine is used to ensure the injection is correctly placed. Shortly after, you will be examined again.

Is the injection painful?
Not particularly, as your physiotherapist has had intensive training in the technique. Sometimes it can be sore for a few hours, but you will be told what to do about this.

How fast does the injection work?
If local anaesthetic is also used the pain should be less within a few minutes, though it may return after about an hour, just
as when you visit the dentist. The steroid usually starts to work within 24 to 48 hours but may take longer.

**How long does the effect last?**
The steroid usually continues working for three to six weeks but symptoms are sometimes eased for longer than this. The overall benefit of a local steroid injection varies from person to person and can depend on the condition being treated.

**How many injections can I have?**
This depends on the part of the body involved. Usually one injection is sufficient, but if the pain is severe or has been there for a long time, you may need more.

**What should I do after the injection?**
The injection can slightly weaken the surrounding area. It is important to rest from strenuous or repetitive activity for two weeks after the injection to prevent further injury.

**Possible side effects?**
Side effects are unlikely. You will receive an information sheet to read through before consenting to the injection. If you notice signs of infection, for example, increasing redness, heat or fever then you must inform a family doctor (GP) immediately.

**When will I have to be seen again?**
The physiotherapist will give you exercises to start two weeks after the injection. You will be reviewed by the shoulder surgeon approximately six weeks after the injection. If you require physiotherapy follow-up, this will also be arranged.
Exercises

Here are some exercises to try to help with your recovery. Try these four to five times per day as described.

- **Postural Exercise**
  Standing tall. Pull your shoulder blades back, together and downwards. Hold this position for three slow breaths and relax. Repeat ten times.

- **Stretching Exercise**
  Sitting or standing in a good posture. Stretch your hands backwards with your palms facing upwards. Hold this position for three slow breaths and relax. Repeat ten times.

- **Strengthening Exercise A**
  Sitting or standing with a good posture. Hold a light weight in the hand of the arm that had the injection.

  Bend your elbow to lift the weight to your shoulder and slowly lower back down to start position. Repeat ten times, or until your arm feels tired or sore. Increase the weight once pain improves or you find the exercise getting too easy.

- **Strengthening Exercise B**
  Sitting or standing with a good posture. Hold a light weight in the hand of the arm that had the injection.

  Gently lift your arm to your shoulder height, keeping the elbow straight. Slowly lower back
down to start position. Repeat ten times, or until your arm feels tired or sore. Increase the weight once pain improves or you find the exercise getting too easy.

**If you have any problems please contact:**

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