



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE
OF DERMATOLOGISTS

Intralesional Steroids

What are they used for?

Intralesional steroids are injected under the surface of the skin by the treating doctor. They include triamcinolone acetonide and betamethasone acetate. This treatment is chosen when the main problem is deeper in the skin or when the top layer of the skin is very thickened, preventing penetration of creams and ointments. It allows a strong treatment to be delivered just to the area where it is needed with minimal effects on the rest of the body.

Intralesional steroids may be used for skin conditions such as:

- [alopecia areata](#)
- [granuloma annulare](#)
- [keloid scars](#)
- [cutaneous lupus](#)
- [prurigo nodularis](#)

What precautions should you take with intralesional steroids?

Allergic reactions are rare. You should tell your doctor if you have had an allergic reaction to a steroid medication in the past.

What monitoring is required?

Monitoring is not usually required.

If large amounts of intralesional steroids are injected frequently, the medication can potentially have the same side effects as systemic steroids. However, the injections are used in relatively small amounts and only every 3 to 4 weeks or so.

What to expect when using intralesional steroids and potential side effects

The intralesional steroid must be spread out over the affected areas of skin. This means that the injection is not as quick as a vaccination injection and sometimes multiple small injections are necessary.

At the time of the injection, there can be:

- stinging or pain, similar to when a local anaesthetic is injected
- a small amount of bleeding.

Subsequent side effects can include:

- infection (rare)
- thinning of the skin. This particularly affects the fatty layer of the skin and can cause an indentation. This usually disappears over time.
- broken capillaries. This is more likely to happen with repeated injections.
- skin colour change. Darkening or lightning of the skin colour may occur. This is usually temporary. It is important to remember that some skin diseases can also leave temporary or permanent discolouration.
- increased hair growth in the area treated (rare).

Very rarely:

- Your doctor will use extra caution when using intralesional steroids in the eye area as the steroid can unexpectedly enter eye blood vessels and result in blindness (very rare).

For a full list of known side effects, please refer to the product information leaflet provided with the medication.

This information has been written by Dr Jenny Byth