

[IMAGE]

## **Knee Osteoarthritis: Steroid Injections Aren't the Answer**

By Editorial Staff

Knee osteoarthritis can be painful and limit your activities, but corticosteroid injections aren't the answer, according to new research published in the May 16, 2017 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. In the study, quarterly steroid injections actually increased cartilage loss over a two-year period without providing any benefit. That's a loss-loss situation if you ask us.

Patients suffering from knee osteoarthritis with synovitis were divided into two groups, with one group receiving the corticosteroid injections every 12 weeks for two years and a second group receiving a placebo (saline injections) at the same frequency and over the same time frame. Patients in the steroid group lost an average of 0.21 mm in cartilage thickness over the two-year period compared with only 0.10 mm, on average, in patients not receiving corticosteroids.

What's more, patients receiving steroid injections scored only 1.2 points lower on a 0-20 pain scale (0 = no pain, 20 = extreme pain), while patients not receiving steroid treatment scored 1.9 points lower following the intervention period. In other words, patients who received no steroids reported less pain at three-month follow-ups than patients who received steroids!

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis in the world, which makes finding effective treatment options paramount. Unfortunately (and as we've said repeatedly with other scenarios), drugs - in this case, injections - may not be the answer. If you suffer from osteoarthritis, talk to your doctor about nondrug alternatives to manage your pain and reduce other symptoms.

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