

P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



Local corticosteroid injections for carpal tunnel syndrome (cts)

Clinical Question	How effective are local corticosteroid injections for carpal tunnel syndrome (cts)?
Bottom Line	Local corticosteroid injections for cts provide greater clinical improvement in symptoms one month after injection compared to placebo (NNT = 1). They also provide significantly greater clinical improvement compared to oral corticosteroids up to three months after treatment. Two injections do not provide significant further clinical improvement of symptoms.
Context	Cts is a common problem with a prevalence of 3.8% in the general population. Up to 1/3 of patients can have spontaneous improvement in their symptoms without any formal medical treatment.
Caveat	Significant symptom relief beyond one month has not been demonstrated.
Reference	Marshall S et al. Local corticosteroid injection for capal tunnel syndrome. Cochrane Review 2007. Issue 1. This review contains 12 trials and 671 participants.
Date (Author)	May 2007 (Brian R McAvoy)

NNT = numbers needed to treat to benefit one person

NNH = numbers needed to harm to benefit one person

Both NNT and NNH are only reported if the studies or pooling of studies is statistically significant

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