

## **Medical Questions**

**By Randy Martin, M.D.**

---

### **Steroid Injections**

Over the past year I have received a number of questions regarding injecting steroids into painful joints. In the Sacramento, California, area where I work, steroid injections are more commonly used in older people with chronic problems rather than a high school athlete with an

acute injury. The orthopedic surgeons in the area also indicate that they rarely inject steroids in high school athletes.

Steroid joint injections are used in inflammatory conditions such as various arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory conditions such as bursitis and tendonitis. What joints are the easiest to inject?

The larger joints such as the knees are the easiest to inject with steroids. Injecting smaller joints such as fingers or deep joints such as the hip require a higher level of expertise by the physician. When injecting the shoulder region or ribs, care must be taken to not push the needle too deep, otherwise a collapsed lung (pneumothorax)