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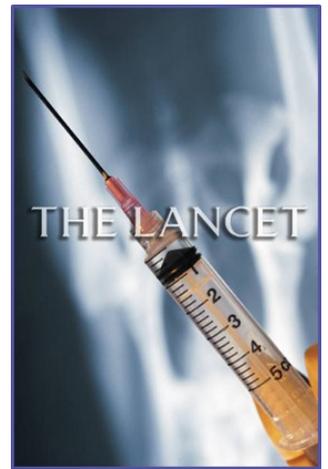
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The Lancet: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials The Efficacy of Corticosteroid Injections for Tendinopathy

In a systematic review published recently by the *Lancet*, Coombes et al. consistently found that peritendinous corticosteroid injections are sometimes effective in the short-term for tendinopathy but usually worsen outcomes past 13 weeks compared to other treatments.¹ Their review identified 3,824 randomized trials, and 41 trials met their inclusion criteria. Contrary to the implications of the commonly used term “tendonitis,” overuse disorders of tendons are typically characterized by angiofibroblastic hyperplasia (hypercellularity, neovascularization, increased protein synthesis, and disorganization of matrix) but not inflammation.²⁻⁵ Coombes and colleagues conclude in part that response to peritendinous injections should not be generalized because effects between sites of tendinopathy vary. Their review includes these conclusions for these sites of tendinopathy:

- **Lateral epicondylalgia:** corticosteroid injection reduces pain in the short term, but is worse than other treatment options, including physical therapy, past 13 weeks.
- **Rotator cuff tendinopathy:** conflicting evidence for even short term benefit. Six studies fail to show corticosteroid injections are better than NSAIDs.
- **Medial epicondylalgia:** the one study meeting inclusion criteria showed no short-term effect on pain versus placebo.
- **Patellar tendons:** large, short-term effect on pain
- **Achilles tendons:** no short-term effect on pain versus placebo



Corticosteroids increased the risk of atrophy for patellar and Achilles tendons. Five of their studies found that corticosteroid injections did not improve the effects of physical therapy versus physical therapy alone. In the two studies using **ultrasound-guided** corticosteroid injections for rotator cuff, Achilles tendon, and patellar tendon, the ultrasound guidance did not improve treatments. However, we are aware of research not meeting inclusion criteria but showing ultrasound guidance does improve short-term pain relief in rotator cuff tendinopathy.⁶ In light of the lack of long-term outcomes and high recurrence rates with peritendinous corticosteroid injections, the authors “urge” practitioners to consider other conservative treatments with better long-term results.

Among these treatment options, of course, is Enfield Health & Wellness Center. Coombes and colleagues found that some physical therapy approaches for tendinopathy compare well and some do not. The protocols used at Enfield Health & Wellness Center have been found effective in the treatment of patellar tendinopathy,^{7,8} patellofemoral pain syndrome,^{9,10} lateral epicondylalgia,¹¹⁻¹⁴ and Achilles tendinosis.¹⁵ For effective, scientifically valid solutions providing long-term benefit, please consider Enfield Health & Wellness Center for your patients with tendinopathies.



Graston Technique Certified Practitioners on Staff

The Graston Technique improves physical therapy results by specifically addressing the fibrosis and scarring usually associated with tendinopathies.¹⁶⁻¹⁹ Ergonomically designed instruments are used to detect and break down scar tissue. In one patellar tendinitis study, normal PT resolved the patient complaint in 60% of cases while instrument assisted, soft tissue mobilization resolved the complaint in 100% of cases.²⁰

Please refer your patients to Enfield Health & Wellness Center
Doctor Recommended, Patient Preferred

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