

Collagenase Injections

Non-Surgical Treatment for Dupuytren's Disease

Dr Whittle is now offering a new non-surgical treatment using collagenase injections for Dupuytren's disease of the hand in selected patients. The collagenase enzyme is injected into the diseased cord without the need for any anaesthetic. This procedure does not require admission to hospital, and can be performed in an office-based setting.

The enzyme weakens the cord and allows for either spontaneous rupture of the cord or for the finger to be pulled straight at a subsequent extension manoeuvre.

Dr Whittle has undertaken appropriate training in the administration of collagenase injections, according to the guidelines of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), and is accredited to undertake this procedure.

The treatment process consists of the following 3 steps:

Step 1: Injection of Xiaflex (collagenase clostridium histolyticum) directly into the collagen cord of the affected finger, using a 27 gauge needle.

Step 2: Manipulation of the affected finger under local anaesthetic, approximately 48 hours later. Rupture of the cord generally occurs after gentle extension, decreasing the contracture and allowing for greater range of motion in the joints.

Step 3: Splinting and monitoring by the hand therapist with follow-up by Dr Whittle after approximately 4 weeks.

Results:

In excess of 50% of patients will obtain a near straight finger at 30 days, with an average of 70-80% improvement in the contracture.

Costs:

Because the collagenase injection is not listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), it is necessary for us to pass the full cost of medication on to our patients. Some health funds and the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide part or full refunds for the cost of medication. It is worthwhile asking your health fund if this applies to you. A comparison of costs between this treatment and the generally more expensive surgical option will be provided to you by Dr Whittle and his staff at the time of consultation, should your condition be appropriate for this intervention.

The introduction of collagenase injections provides a non-surgical treatment option for adults with Dupuytren's contracture. However, not every patient is suitable for this treatment. If you would like to discuss whether this is an appropriate treatment option for you, please discuss this with your general practitioner, and arrange a referral if appropriate.