



Facet Joint Injections

What is a Facet Joint Injection?

A Facet Joint Injection is the injection of numbing medicine and steroid into the facet joint.

What are facet joints?

Facet joints are small joints found throughout the spine which enable movement.

Who can benefit from Facet Joint Injections?

Patients with back and neck pain due to arthritis of the spine as well as certain types of headaches may benefit from Facet Joint Injections.

How do Facet Joint Injections help?

Steroids are potent anti-inflammatory medicines which can decrease swelling and pain. Because the medications are delivered to the site of pain, smaller doses can be given, generally with more relief than medicines given by mouth.

How often can these injections be given?

Your doctor will determine how many injections should be given, however, 5 to 6 injections can usually be given per year. Your relief from

each injection will determine how many injections can be given.

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects which will be explained in more detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief
- Localized pain at the injection site

What if I am diabetic?

Your blood sugars may be increased for a few days following the injection and may require closer monitoring.

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

Coumadin must be stopped 5 days before your procedure and you must have some laboratory studies taken

immediately before your procedure (Eg., PT, INR). Your doctor may ask you to stop other medications before your procedure as well.

Does the injection hurt?

The area is numbed with local anesthetic before the injection, thus most patients experience only moderate discomfort.

Will I have any restrictions?

You should take it easy on the day of an injection. Driving is generally not permitted on the day of a procedure. Otherwise no restrictions are present.

What if I have other questions?

Your doctor will be happy to answer any questions you may have either before or on the day of your procedure.