

Patient Information: Facet Joint Injections

Why am I having this injection?

- Facet joints are found at the back of your spine. Your doctor feels that your back pain is caused by inflammation within these joints
- A steroid and local anesthetic (numbing drug) can be injected into these joints to reduce inflammation and hopefully pain
- The effect of these injections is different for each patient
- Relief can last for several months, even years but sometimes pain is not relieved at all

What do I need to do beforehand?

- Please inform us as soon as possible if you are taking any blood thinning drugs such as warfarin
- You do not need to fast
- If you are diabetic then no special precautions are needed
- Please arrange for someone to drive you home afterwards

How is it performed?

- A Radiologist (specialist radiology doctor) will perform the procedure
- He/she will numb the skin with a local anesthetic
- A thin needle is inserted into the joint under the guidance of X-Rays
- The radiologist will then inject the medication into the joint

How long is the procedure?

- You will need to lie face down for approximately 20-30 minutes
- You will be able to leave shortly afterwards

What are the side-effects?

- Side-effects are rare after this procedure. They may include some minor bruising from the needle and temporary numbness at the injection site or down the leg

What are the risks?

- The injection did not help the pain. This can be for a number of causes i.e the back pain has another cause
- The pain is made worse. This would be unusual but if it does occur then it is commonly due to local muscle spasm and settles down on its own
- Infection. This is a rare complication. The procedure is performed under sterile and clean conditions.
- Allergic reaction. This is rare but please tell your doctor before the treatment about all of your drug allergies

Should you have any queries, the Radiologist would be happy to discuss them with before the procedure