

FACET JOINT INJECTIONS



What is a Facet Joint Injection?

A Facet Joint Injection (also known as a zygapophysial joint block) is performed to determine whether a facet joint is a source of pain. Facet joints are located on the back of the spine, where one vertebra slightly overlaps another. These joints guide and restrict the spine's movement.

A facet joint injection is a precise diagnostic tool that also provides excellent therapeutic results. Using fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance, physicians are able to see and accurately target the affected joint(s).

Facet joint injections combine a local anesthetic and a corticosteroid anti-inflammatory medication. This mixture relieves both pain and inflammation coming from the involved joint. Since they are performed using local anesthetic, facet joint injections offer the advantage of providing immediate feedback in confirming the source of your pain.

How is the Procedure Done?

A Facet Joint Injection is typically done with the patient lying on their stomach. Your blood pressure and oxygenation will be monitored. The skin on the back is cleaned with an antiseptic solution and then the procedure is done. Next, the physician inserts a needle into the facet joint (using a fluoroscope for guidance). Contrast dye confirms the needle's proper placement, and then a mixture of anesthetic and steroid medication is injected to reduce inflammation and provide pain relief. Patients may experience relief for several days or months, and may have up to three injections per year.

What to Expect After the Injection

Shortly after the injection, you may notice that your pain may be gone or considerably less. This is because of the effect of the local anesthetic and lasts only for a few hours. Your pain may return and you may have some soreness at the injection site for about one day. Patients should start noticing pain relief starting about 1-2 days after the procedure is completed.

In Pain? We Can Help.

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