

Facet Joint Injection

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a facet joint medial branch block?

A facet joint medial branch block involves injecting local anaesthetics into or around a facet joint to see if this relieves your back pain. Sometimes steroids are also used to reduce inflammation and to make the pain relief last longer.

What are the benefits of a facet joint medial branch block?

A facet joint medial branch block can be used to find out if your pain is caused by your facet joints.

Are there any alternatives to the injection?

An x-ray or scan can show if you have osteoarthritis in one or more of your facet joints.

If you decide not to have an injection, your doctor may be able to suggest other methods of pain relief. You may need more painkillers that are more likely to make you feel sick or drowsy.

What does the procedure involve?

A facet joint medial branch block usually takes less than 30 minutes. Your doctor may use an x-ray to guide them while they give the injection.

Your doctor will carefully insert the needle for the injection. They may inject dye (colourless contrast fluid) and take an x-ray to help them to check that the needle is in the right position. Sometimes your doctor will use an ultrasound scanner to help guide them while they insert the needle.

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

- Failure of the injection to relieve your pain
- Worsening pain
- Backache
- Allergic reaction
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication

- Seizures
- Infection around your spine
- Short-term nerve injury
- Visual disturbance or loss of vision
- Long-term nerve injury
- Blood clot around your spine

How soon will I recover?

After a short while you should be able to go home.

Rest if you feel tired.

You should be able to return to normal activities the next day.

Summary

A facet joint medial branch block can be used to find out if your pain is caused by your facet joints, or to treat pain in your facet joints.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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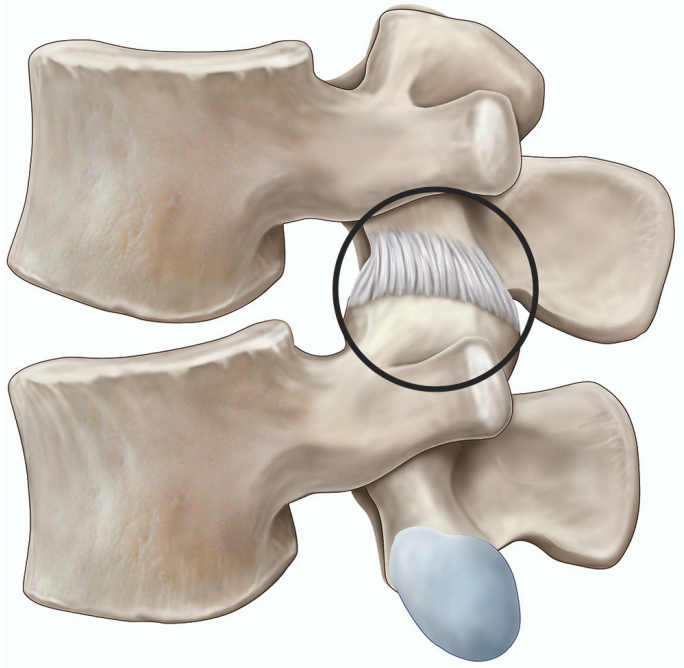
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Reviewer

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Illustrator

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A side view of lumbar vertebrae