

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND COMPLETELY FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SAFETY

Facet Joint Injections

What are facet joints?

Facet joints are located on both sides of the spine where the spinal bones overlap. They guide and allow the complicated movements of the spine.

What is facet joint syndrome?

Facet joints produce low back pain when they become inflamed due to arthritis or prolonged pressure. The pain typically worsens with cold damp weather when standing, walking or turning in bed.

Why inject the facet joints?

Injection of these joints is useful to diagnose and treat facet joint pain syndrome.

The Procedure

- Each procedure usually takes approximately fifteen minutes. Please set aside about 2 hours from registration until release from the surgicenter.
- Up to four injections per side may be performed in the same session, depending on symptoms, as the facet joints are small and very close together.
- Local anesthetic is used to diminish discomfort associated with the injection.
- Under fluoroscopy (X-ray), the physician directs a spinal needle into the facet joint.
- Contrast is used to confirm proper placement.
- Medication is then injected into the facet joint.
- During the procedure, you may feel slight pressure or discomfort in the back
- Following the procedure, you may feel numbness or absence of pain for up to 6 hours due to the local anesthetic.
- The beneficial effects of the steroid medication usually begin in 2 to 3 days or may take as long as one week.

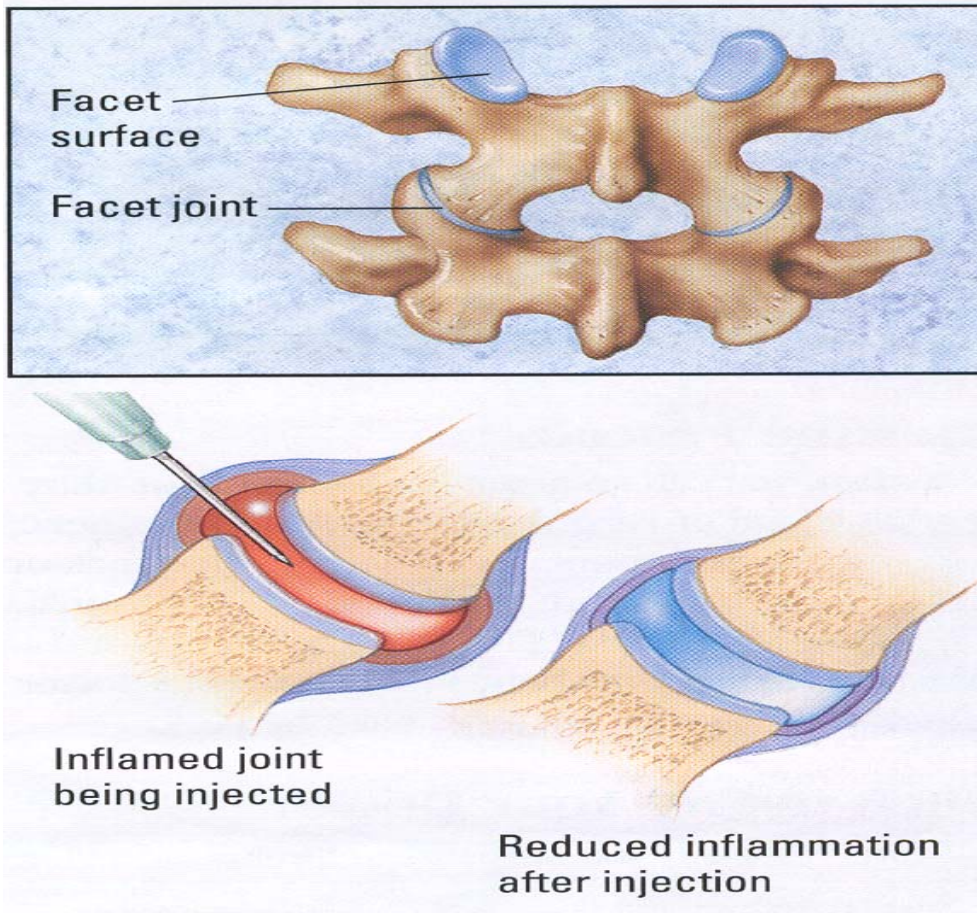
Potential Complications

- Minor side effects occur in approximately 1-5% of patients and can last several days. These can include heartburn, increased appetite, trouble sleeping, low grade fever, redness of the face, headache, and minor pain at the injection site.
- Rare but potentially serious complications can include spinal infections, spinal bleeding, and major blood vessel injury. Every precaution is taken against these occurrences.
- Nerve injury and paralysis are exceedingly rare.
- All known allergies must be discussed with the physician as allergic reactions to X-ray contrast dyes, local anesthetic or steroids can be a medical emergency.
- To alleviate risk of complication:
 - Sterile needles, medications and gloves are used for each injection
 - Patients taking blood thinning medications must stop taking these medications prior to the procedure.

OVER

What is a Facet Joint?

Bones called **vertebrae** make up your spine. Each vertebra has **facets** (flat surfaces) that touch where the vertebrae fit together. These form a structure called a **facet joint** on each side of the vertebrae.



What is a Facet Joint injection?

One or more facet joints in your back or neck can become **inflamed** (swollen and irritated). This may cause pain. During a **facet joint injection**, medication is injected into the inflamed joints. This treatment helps reduce inflammation and relieve pain. Pain relief should last for weeks to months. If the pain returns, you may need a repeat injection.