

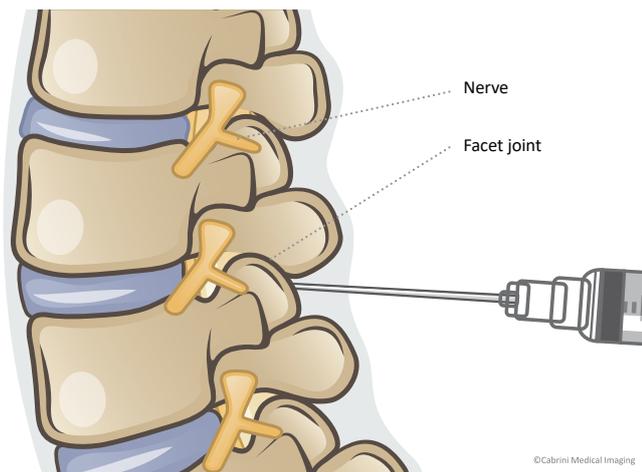
Facet joint injection

What is a facet joint injection?

A facet joint injection is an injection of a steroid medication, usually with a long acting anaesthetic to one or more facet joints in your back. The intention is to give you temporary relief from your pain and to diagnose the cause of your pain.

Pain relief from this injection varies in its effectiveness and in some cases people do not get any relief from their symptoms. It should be noted that steroid medication can take a few days to work and in some cases a week may pass before you start to notice symptomatic relief.

It is important you read the following information so that you will be able to consent to this procedure. If you have any further questions you will be given an opportunity to ask nursing or medical staff on the day.



Before you come in for the procedure

You will be given instructions by Cabrini Medical Imaging. Please take note of the following and contact the department on the number below if you have any concerns.

- If you are on any blood thinning medication, please make sure you let staff know as soon as possible, as this could affect the ability to do your procedure. Please check with your GP if unsure of your medication.
- On the day of your procedure please bring a list of your current medications (this includes over the counter medications, and herbal remedies)
- Please make sure you have someone to drive you home (you are not permitted to drive until the following day)

How your facet joint injection will proceed

Once you have been registered at the office of the medical imaging department, you will be prepared for your procedure and taken to the appropriate room.

At this point you have an opportunity to ask one of the nursing staff further questions or to speak to the doctor performing the injection. You will be positioned on the table where the procedure is to take place.

Once you are lying on table (usually on your stomach) it is very important that you remain still for the rest of the injection.

After washing your skin with antiseptic, a small amount of local anaesthetic may be injected under the skin in the relevant area. This may sting for a moment. The doctor will then place the needle into position at the facet joint. To confirm this position, a small amount of x-ray contrast may be injected by the doctor and a repeat scan performed. Sometimes the needle will need slight adjustment. You may experience some discomfort at this stage, usually through the area you normally get your back pain.

Once the needle or needles are in the correct position the steroid and sometimes long acting local anaesthetic will be injected by the doctor. At this point the procedure is finished, but it is important to remain on the table until instructed otherwise.

You may then be taken to a recovery area for a short period, or you may be able to go straight home if you are feeling ok.

As with all medical procedures there are associated risks and complications with having this procedure done, they can be broken down into common, rare and very rare.

Common risks and complications

- Discomfort to the area, following the injection. This may be due to the tissues being aggravated by the procedure.
- Increase in your normal pain due to additional pressure of the medication in the joints
- Numbness or loss of sensation through the affected area due to long acting anaesthetic administered during procedure. This wears off after a few hours, but can increase your risk of an accident if you are not careful.
- Bleeding or bruising to the localised area

Rare risks and complications

- Infection, which could require additional treatment, possibly antibiotics
- Adverse effects from the steroid component of the injection, including insomnia and facial flushing
- The procedure may have to be abandoned due to technical or medical reasons
- Allergy to medications used during this procedure
- You may not get any relief from this procedure, requiring further treatment

Very rare risks and complications

- Damage to the spinal cord requiring surgery and other treatment
- Permanent nerve damage, leading to paralysis

How do I get my results?

Digital images are immediately available to your doctor and your records will be kept permanently. This occurs through a system called PACS. **If a priority report is requested it will be issued within two hours and faxed or emailed to your doctor, however this can sometimes take up to 24 hours.**

If your referring doctor wants to see you on the day of your examination, please advise the reception staff when you arrive for your appointment, so the appropriate information can be made available for you to take to your doctor.

Important

It is important to let us know when you make your booking if you are or think you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.

It is important to bring with you your referral, previous x-rays and any other tests (only if previous ones were **not** done at Cabrini or I-MED).

Questions

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the relevant number below.