

Facet Injections

Facet Injections are used to relieve inflammation and pain from the back and/or leg. A facet injection is very similar to an epidural steroid injection, but is used in an inflamed facet joint instead of the epidural space. Inflammation of the facet joint may be caused by arthritis, degeneration or injury. This injection is a minimally invasive technique that injects anti-inflammatory and anesthetic into a facet joint to decrease inflammation and pain. Often this is used in conjunction with a rehabilitation program.

Diagnostically these facet injections can help determine the source of pain, in addition to decreasing the pain and inflammation.

Common Uses for Facet Injections

- Lumbar spinal stenosis is a narrowing of the spinal canal that causes terrible pain.
- Disk herniation, the nucleus of a disk becomes displaced and creates pressure on the spinal cord and nerves.
- Spondylolysis, degenerative arthritis, osteoarthritis, of the cervical or lumbar vertebrae and related tissue. It may cause pressure on nerve roots with subsequent pain or paresthesia in the extremities. (Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, 19th Edition)
- Leg or butt pain due to the sciatic nerve, sciatica.
- Arthritis, which is pain, swelling, stiffness or deformity caused by joint inflammation.
- Postoperative Pain

How Are Facet Injections Performed?

Our Interventional Radiologists perform this procedure is with fluoroscopy, real-time x-ray, guidance. The patient will be placed on an x-ray table either flat or with a pillow to make the area of concern more easily accessible. The target area will be cleaned and slightly numbed with a local anesthetic. Using the fluoroscopy guidance, the needle will be inserted directly into the sensory nerves located in the facet joints. Contrast may be injected to be sure that the needle location is accurate for the patient's pain and inflammation. The patient may feel a little bit of pressure during the procedure. Once the accurate location is determined, the corticosteroid, and sometimes anesthetic, is injected into the facet joint. This

procedure normally takes from 15-20 minutes followed by a small recovery period.

What Takes Place After the Procedure?

A majority of patients will be able to leave immediately after the procedure is complete. The patient may have slight discomfort from the fluid pressure. A driver should accompany the patient to the facility to take them home safely.

This procedure can be repeated up to three times a year, as necessary. If you do experience discomfort an ice pack may help for the first couple of day. For any further questions, please consult your physician. For more details on Facet Injections you may also visit www.spineuniverse.com or www.spine-health.com.

Learn More

Spine Universe ? www.spineuniverse.com/article

Mayfield Clinic ? www.mayfieldclinic.com/PE-FACET

Spine-Health ? www.spine-health.com