

Cervical facet joint injection

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET CT08



Your appointment:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Duration of examination

The procedure time will vary depending on the number of facet joints being injected. Generally, the procedure will take approximately 30 minutes, plus post-procedure care.

Please bring with you:

- > Your request form
- > Medicare and any
- > Healthcare cards

Payment on the day of the examination is requested.

For more information regarding Benson Radiology please visit:

bensonradiology.com.au

What is a facet joint injection?

Facet joints are small joints between the vertebrae that allow the spine to move. Conditions such as degenerative arthritis and inflammation of these joints can cause pain.

The injection requested by your doctor contains a mixture of local anaesthetic and a steroid, which is an anti-inflammatory medication. The injection is intended to relieve pain by reducing inflammation and decreasing pain signals from the affected facet joint, which also may help improve mobility.

Patient preparation

You will need to fast for two hours before the procedure.

Please let us know if you have any allergies or take blood-thinning medication, such as aspirin, warfarin, dabigatran or clopidogrel.

You may need to have a blood-clotting test before the procedure and have your medication adjusted by your doctor.

What will happen during the examination?

You will be asked to change into a gown and lie face down on the CT examination table. The procedure is performed under sterile conditions. The skin around the injection site will be cleansed, and a local anaesthetic may be administered.

CT imaging is used to accurately locate the area to be injected and guide the needle. It is important that you remain as still as possible during the procedure.

A radiologist, who is a specialist medical imaging doctor, will use CT guidance to position the needle within the facet joint and inject the steroid and local anaesthetic mixture. The needle will then be removed and a sterile dressing applied.

Are there any risks?

You will receive a small dose of x-ray radiation from the CT scan. Please advise the radiographer if you are, or think you may be, pregnant.

Temporary pain, tenderness, bruising, increased neck pain, light-headedness or numbness may occur. Less commonly, you may experience bleeding, infection or a reaction to the medication.

Serious complications are very rare and may include significant bleeding or injury to a nerve or blood vessel. Any permanent neurological injury is exceptionally rare.

Seek urgent medical attention if you experience severe pain, fever, significant swelling, or new numbness or weakness.

Effects from the treatment

The local anaesthetic may provide temporary pain relief for up to four hours. Paracetamol may be taken if you experience discomfort. The steroid can take up to a week to reach its maximum effect. The degree and duration of symptom relief vary between patients.

Some patients may not experience pain relief if inflammation of the injected facet joint is not the main cause of their pain. This does not necessarily mean the procedure has failed. The response provides useful information to your doctor and may indicate that other possible causes of pain should be considered.

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After the examination

You may experience some soreness or bruising at the needle site and, rarely, minor muscle spasm. You may also experience temporary numbness at the injection site or in your affected arm. A temporary increase in neck pain may occur due to the additional pressure of the injection solution within the facet joint.

Following the procedure, we will assess you for any numbness or weakness and monitor you for approximately 30 minutes.

Before you leave, we will reassess you to ensure you are comfortable and walking safely. Once you have recovered sufficiently and can move around safely, you will be free to go home.

You must arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure. Please consider this when making your appointment.

Do not undertake any lifting or physical activity that may aggravate your condition for at least 12 hours after the procedure.

It is important you understand why and how we will be assisting you. If you have any questions, please call one of our clinics or speak to our staff on the day of your visit.