Facet joint injection

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET INT05 (SEDATION)

Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Duration of examination

This will vary according to the number of facet joints injected. Normal examination time will be approximately 40 minutes.

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?

The facet joints are the articulations between vertebral bodies that allow the vertebral column (spine) to move. Conditions such as degenerative arthritis and inflammation of the facet joints can cause pain.

The injection your doctor has requested is a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid (an anti-inflammatory medication). The injection is intended to relieve pain by decreasing facet joint nerve activity and reduce inflammation allowing increased mobility.

Patient preparation

You will need to fast for six hours prior to the procedure.

Please inform us if you are taking any blood-thinning medication (i.e. Aspirin, Warfarin, Dabigatran or Clopidogrel) or if you have any allergies. You may need to have a blood clotting test before the procedure and have your medication adjusted by your doctor.

Please advise the radiographer if you are, or think you may be pregnant.

Sedation

An anaesthetist will perform the twilight sedation. Please note this is not a general anaesthetic, and you will still be awake during the procedure. The anaesthetist will use the appropriate amount of sedative and monitor you throughout the duration of the procedure.

What will happen during the examination?

You will be asked to change into a gown and to lie on the CT examination table. The procedure is performed under sterile conditions with the skin in the area to be injected cleansed. CT imaging is used to accurately locate the area to be injected and to guide the needle. It is important you keep as still as possible during the procedure.

A radiologist will position the needle within the facet joint using CT guidance and inject the steroid and local anaesthetic.

The needle is then removed and a sterile dressing applied.

Are there any risks

You will receive a small dose of x-ray radiation.

Complications such as infection, allergy, bleeding are considered to be very rare.

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Post examination care

Following the procedure you may feel some slight grogginess. You will be kept for observation until you are cleared by a nurse and feel comfortable to leave.

You are required to have someone with you to drive you home and stay with you overnight.

Please allow up to four hours for the procedure.

After the examination

You may experience some soreness or bruising at the needle site and, rarely, minor muscle spasm. You may also experience some temporary numbness at the injection site and down your affected leg. A temporary increase in neck pain may be felt due to the extra pressure of the injection solution in your 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 are mobilising safely, you will be able to go home.

You will require someone to drive you home after the procedure. Please consider this when making your appointment. We advise you not to perform any lifting or physical activities that may aggravate your condition for at least 12 hours after the procedure.

Effects from the treatment

The local anaesthetic may give temporary relief from pain 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. Relief from symptoms does vary between patients, both in time and scale.

Some people may not receive pain relief from the examination if inflammation of the injected facet joint is not the main cause for their pain. This is generally not a failure of the procedure. This information is useful for your doctor as it indicates other causes of pain may need to be considered.

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.

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