

Facet Joint Injections and Nerve Root Blocks

Your doctor has asked for either a facet joint injection or a nerve root block to be performed. We have designed this brochure to help you prepare for your procedure. Facet joint injections or nerve root blocks are targeted injections into the spine to help relieve inflammation and pain.

Preparation

- You will be given instructions by our booking staff regarding the time of your appointment and any necessary preparation.
- Please bring any previous scans if not performed within our clinic.
- Please shower on the morning of your procedure before coming to the hospital.
- You are not required to fast prior to this procedure and you should take your normal medications.
- You need to notify us and your referring doctor if you are on blood thinning medications or injections (eg aspirin, warfarin, coumadin, Plavix or Clexane etc.) or if you are taking fish oil or krill oil as these also increase the risk of bleeding.

Procedure

- You will be taken into the radiology department, changed into a gown and asked to lie face down on a CT scan table.
- A specialist Radiologist performs the procedure assisted by nursing and technical staff. The site for the injection is confirmed by CT scans obtained immediately prior to the examination. The overlying skin is cleaned and then numbed local anaesthetic. A needle is placed into the facet joint or near the nerve guided by the CT images. A mixture of local anaesthetic and corticosteroid ('cortisone') is then injected. The needle is removed and a small dressing is applied.

Post procedure

- You may experience some numbness in the back or down the leg from the local anaesthetic and this should wear off over a few hours. You may need to remain in the radiology department for up to half an hour after the procedure.
- You will need someone to drive you home.
- There may be increased pain after the injection for 24-48 hours until the corticosteroid takes effect. Take your usual pain medication. You should avoid any strenuous activity for 24 hours.
- The dressing can be removed the day after the procedure.



If you experience bleeding or excessive bruising/swelling, redness or other evidence of infection please contact our clinic nurses between 8.00am and 6.00pm. Outside these hours please contact your local emergency centre or referring doctor.