

# Facet Joint injection

A facet joint injection is used to inject medication into a particular facet joint in the spine. The facet joint connects the inferior articular process of the vertebra above and with the superior articular process of the vertebra or sacrum below. A facet joint can be a source of back pain.

## Facet Joint Injection

A facet joint injection can be diagnostic, to determine a pain source, or therapeutic to provide ongoing pain relief.

Medications injected include:

- » Lignocaine - a local anaesthetic.
- » Corticosteroid - a powerful anti-inflammatory. This may take up to one month to work and the duration of its effect is variable, lasting from weeks to many months.

## Indications for facet joint injection

Facet joint injections are used if the facet joints are irritated or inflamed, often by facet joint degeneration. This degeneration can occur in isolation, or as a result of degenerative disc disease.

## Technique

You will be lying face down for lumbar facet injection or face up for cervical injection. A CT scan is performed to locate the appropriate joint. Following an injection of local anaesthetic a long, fine needle is inserted and guided into the facet joint. Further CT scans are performed to confirm correct placement of the needle.

The whole process takes approximately 20 minutes.

## Risks

The risks associated with a facet joint injection include:

- » Increased pain at the injection site for several days.
- » Worsening of symptoms
- » Bleeding

- » Infection at the skin puncture site or deeper within the facet joint. This is very rare.
- » Steroid side effects include fluid retention, local skin pigmentation, increased blood pressure or blood sugar, mood swings, insomnia, or transient immunity decrease.

## No smoking

Smoking damages every part of your body and decreases the chance of a successful procedure.

If you smoke, you should stop now.



Lumbar facet joint with needle in situ



## Expectations of a Facet Joint Injection

Approximately 50% of patients experience significant temporary relief. The duration of relief is unpredictable, varying from weeks to many months.

It is normal to experience increased pain for several days following the injection.

Normal activities may be resumed the day after injection as tolerated.

## Appointment

Please phone or SMS our friendly booking service on **1300 788 508** or request an appointment online [www.canberraimaging.com.au](http://www.canberraimaging.com.au)

## What to bring

Please bring the following items with you to your appointment:

- Your referral
- Any relevant films
- Medicare card
- Pension / Health Care card

## Your results

Your doctor will receive fast and convenient electronic access to your reports and images. Canberra Imaging Group strongly advise that you return to your referring doctor in order for your doctor to discuss your results with you.

