

LUMBAR FACET JOINT INJECTION/MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK

What is a lumbar facet?

Lumbar facet joints are small joints about the size of the thumb nails located in pairs on the back of the spine. They provide stability and guide motion in the lower back. If the joints become painful, they may cause pain in the low back, abdomen, buttocks, groin or legs.

INCLUDEPICTURE "http://isc.stanford.edu/images/lumbar-facet.jpg" *
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What is a lumbar facet joint injection?

Used as a diagnostic tool, the injection confirms that a facet joint is the source of your pain. An anti-inflammatory steroid medication and local anesthetic is injected into the inflamed joint. The steroid agent shrinks the swelling and the local anesthetic numbs the inflamed area and relaxes the muscles around the facet joint. To ensure proper placement of the medication, the procedure will be performed under x-ray.

What is the purpose of the lumbar facet injection?

To treat low back, abdomen, buttock, groin or leg pain that may be due to inflammation of a facet joint. By doing the injection, the inflammation can be reduced therefore alleviating your pain. Although not designed for permanent relief, we may repeat the injection to confirm your pain is originating from the joints of your spine before proceeding with the next treatment option.

What to expect during the procedure:

During the injection, your low back / leg pain will be increased temporarily. Immediately after the injection, you may feel your legs slightly heavier and they may be numb. You may get 4-6 hours of back pain relief immediately after the injection, however your pain will return and you may have more pain than usual for 5-6 days afterwards.

How is the lumbar facet injection done?

Upon registering at the Southwest Ohio Pain Center, you will be directed to the pre-operative holding area. You will then be taken to the x-ray area and placed face-down on the table. Your low back will be cleansed with an anti-septic solution and numbed with an anesthetic. The doctor will use the x-ray to help guide placement of the needle into the joint. The injection will then be performed.

The procedure takes about 15-30 minutes.

How much relief will I get & how long will it last?

Relief varies from one person to the next. The only way to know is to have the injection performed. The steroid may take several days to work and peaks in about 2 weeks. Therefore, it may be several weeks before you feel a change in your pain. You may apply ice to the affected area for 20 minutes every 2 hours to decrease local tenderness. After the first day, you can perform activities as before and return to work.

Will I have any restrictions on the day of the procedure?

You may NOT drive for the remainder of the day after your procedure. No heat is to be used on the injection area for the remainder of the day. No tub bath or soaking in water (pools/Jacuzzi, etc) for the remainder of the day.

For what reasons should I call the Southwest Ohio Pain Center after the injection?

If you experience severe back pain, new numbness or weakness of your legs, loss of control of your bladder or bowels, or have signs of infection (temperature greater than 99.9° , drainage, redness/heat at insertion site) – call IMMEDIATELY.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE, PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:

- ◆ Take all blood pressure pills & heart medications prior to the procedure with a sip of water at least 3 hours before your requested arrival time. Your vitals must be stable to have the procedure.
- ◆ Have a responsible person to take you home.
- ◆ Arrive at the requested procedure time. Please do not be late or your procedure may be cancelled.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE:

- ◆ **Do not** take ANY of the following 5 days before your procedure: Coumadin
- ◆ **Do not** take ANY of the following 7 days before your procedure: Plavix
- ◆ Coumadin must be stopped prior to the injection. You must have a normal INR prior to the injection. **Do not stop the drug by yourself.**
- ◆ Eat or drink 6 hours before the procedure.

NOTE: YOUR PROCEDURE WILL BE CANCELLED IF:

**You have an active infection, flu, cold, fever, or very high blood pressure.
You do not have a responsible driver to take you home, arrive late for your
procedure,
or unable to follow the medication / fluid restrictions.**

Call the office at (501) 219-1114 for procedure related questions.