



Fact Sheet – Image Guided Facet Joint Injection

Introduction

The spine is made up of bones called vertebrae which are connected by pairs of facet joints on the right and left sides which allow movement. Like elsewhere in the body, facet joints can become arthritic and cause pain.

At Direct Radiology, we use a CT scanner to guide a thin needle very accurately in to the facet joint. The injections are designed to decrease inflammation, reduce pain and improve movement.

How do I prepare for a CT guided facet joint injection?

- Please bring to Direct Radiology any previous scans and reports (such as x-ray, CT and MRIs) as this will assist the radiologist performing the procedure.
- We accept referrals written on any request form even if it is for another radiology service.

Because you will be lying on your stomach during the procedure and will be uncomfortable if your stomach is too full, it is advisable to limit food intake to a light meal only, up to 2 hours before the procedure.

We strongly recommend that you organize for a responsible person to drive you home on the day of the procedure.

What happens during an image guided facet joint injection?

We will ensure that the process is as comfortable as possible.

Our staff and radiologist will guide you each step of the way.

You will be asked to wear a gown for the procedure.

During the procedure you will be lying on your stomach on a bed that moves into the CT scanner.

A series of planning scans will be done first.

Antiseptic will then be used to clean your skin before local anaesthetic is given. This will cause some initial stinging but will quickly become numb.

A needle will then be placed into the facet joint using CT guidance and medication injected.

How long does the procedure take?

The whole procedure itself takes no more than 15 to 20 minutes.

What happens after an image guided facet joint injection?

The facet joint may be irritated by the procedure and symptoms may be aggravated for a day or so before the steroid starts having its effect. Occasionally, numbness or weakness lasting a few hours will occur in the arm or leg on the same side as the injection.



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Do not drive or operate machinery for at least 24 hours after the procedure.

Do not participate in strenuous activity that day.

You may remove any bandages in the evening before going to bed.

If you have diabetes, your blood sugar numbers may increase. Your GP will counsel you regarding management

Direct Radiology will issue a report to your referring doctor.

What are the risks of an image guided lumbar epidural corticosteroid injection?

This is a very safe procedure with infection, bleeding and allergy to the steroid and local anaesthetic possible but rare.

If you develop a fever, chills, increasing pain, or if you have new symptoms, please call your GP directly.

IMPORTANT

Please call Direct Radiology on (03) 9489 8884 if you have any questions as we are more than happy to assist.