



Facet Nerve Block/Medial Branch Block

What is a Facet Nerve Injection?

A Facet Nerve block (Medial Branch Block) is the injection of numbing medicine onto the nerves which supply sensation to the facet joint in order to reduce pain.

What are facet joints?

Facet joints are small joints found throughout the spine which enable movement.

Who can benefit from Facet Nerve Blocks?

Patients with back and neck pain due to arthritis of the spine as well as certain types of headaches may benefit from facet nerve injections.

How do Facet Nerve Blocks help?

Facet Nerve Blocks are diagnostic procedures designed to determine the sources of back pain, neck pain, and certain headaches. The degree of pain relief you obtain from these injections will be helpful to your doctor in devising a treatment plan.

How often can these injections be given?

Your doctor will determine how many injections should be given

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects, which will be explained in more detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief
- Localized pain at the injection site

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

Coumadin must be stopped 5 days before your procedure and you must have some laboratory studies taken immediately before your procedure (Eg., PT, INR). Your doctor may ask you to stop other medications before your procedure as well.

Does the injection hurt?

The area is numbed with local anesthetic before the injection, thus most patients experience only moderate discomfort.

Will I have any restrictions?

You should take it easy on the day of an injection. Driving is generally not permitted on the day of a procedure. Otherwise no restrictions are present.

What if I have other questions?

Your doctor will be happy to answer any questions you may have either before or on the day of your procedure.

What if I obtain relief?

If you obtain relief (even temporary) from these nerve blocks, then a more permanent nerve block called Radiofrequency Ablation can be performed to provide prolonged pain relief. This procedure may be offered to you at a later date and will be explained to you separately.