

**Hours of Operation**

Monday–Thursday,  
8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Friday,  
8 a.m.–4 p.m.

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## Facet Joint Injections (Intra-articular)

Joint injections can help to diagnose or treat many kinds of back pain. This procedure places anti-inflammatory medicine near the areas of inflammation. This can promote relief and help the body heal. The advantage of this method is that the dose applied to the injury site is many times higher than what can be achieved by taking pills.

### Important

All medicines or supplements that affect bleeding time must be stopped. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication should be stopped two to three days before the day of the procedure. These medications include Relafin, Naprosyn, ibuprophen, etc. Avoid taking aspirin, baby aspirin, or any other aspirin products one week prior to the injection. If you have any questions regarding these medications, please call your doctor. Taking these medications prior to your injection may result in your injection being canceled. The medications may be resumed the day following the procedure. If you are taking Coumadin, please consult your prescribing doctor prior to the procedure. You will need to discontinue Coumadin for four to five days prior to the injection. Once given the okay by your doctor to discontinue Coumadin, you can call us for further instructions.

**You may not eat or drink anything three hours prior to this procedure (six hours if receiving IV sedation) and you will need an adult to drive you home.**

### The procedure

You will be lying face down on the table. We will clean your lower back thoroughly and then numb the area with a local anesthetic. We use an x-ray machine to confirm proper needle positioning prior to inserting the medication. Patients usually feel some pressure as the medication is injected but they tolerate the procedure well. The entire process only takes a few minutes.

The injected medication is a time-release Cortisone derivative. It is common to get no pain relief for 48 to 72 hours. The duration of the pain relief is variable and more related to the cause of the pain rather than the medication that treats the pain.

### Afterward

Most people experience little to no side effects from the steroid. However, some experience increased thirst, increased appetite and tissue swelling. Flushing of the skin is sometimes seen. Some patients will experience discomfort from the injections for a few days. Diabetic patients should monitor their blood sugars closely for the first 24 hours after the procedure since steroids can occasionally increase blood sugar levels. Patients with hypertension should check their blood

pressures following the procedure as blood pressure can occasionally be elevated by the medication.

The time period of reduced pain following the procedure can be used to great benefit with a physical therapy and/or home exercise program. Physical therapy, exercises and normal activity can be resumed the day following the procedure.

If you experience fever, chills, redness around the injection site, severe headache with vomiting or problems urinating, you should call the doctor who gave you the injection or go to an emergency department.

If you experience any relief from the treatment and would like to schedule a follow-up injection, call the ordering physician.