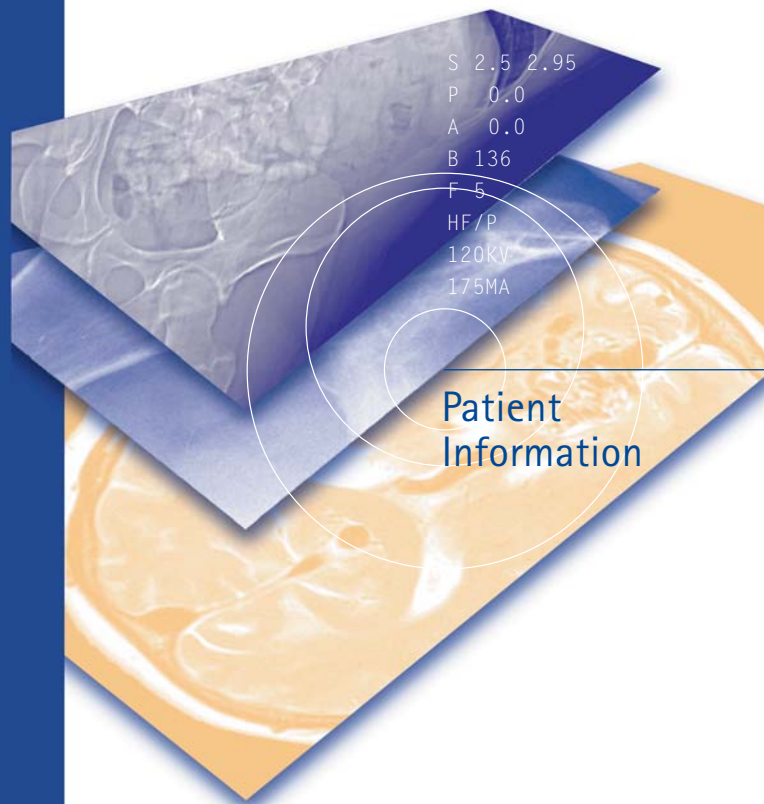


Please bring any previous x-rays with you on the day of your examination

Facet Joint Injections



Your next appointment:

Date: _____

Time: _____

What are facet joint injections and nerve root blocks?

Injections into the sliding joints at the back of the spine (facet joints) or next to the nerves of the neck or lower back as they leave the spine (nerve root injection or blocks) are ways to treat neck, back and leg pain not helped by other treatments.

Preparation

No preparation is needed unless your doctor has arranged for sedation. Please inform us if you are on medication to thin your blood (e.g., Warfarin, Aspirin).

If you are on special drugs or have diabetes and are on insulin, take your usual medicines and diet.

Procedure

Whilst you lie flat on your stomach on an x-ray table, the cleaned back area will be injected with local anaesthetic. Guided by x-ray or CT scanning, a needle will be put into the facet joint or next to the nerve. Local anaesthetic and cortisone (steroid) solution will be injected. This may be uncomfortable for a very short time during the injection until the local anaesthetic takes effect.

This procedure takes approximately 15-20 minutes depending on the number of joints or nerves injected.

Afterwards you may stay with us for a short time. You may then continue your usual activities or rest if you wish.

It is best if you do not drive yourself home, but if unavoidable, allow 2 hours for the effect of local anaesthetic to wear off.

How long will the treatment last?

The effect varies for different people. There may be relief for months to years, but this is a treatment, not a cure, for back problems. Some people get no benefit.

What are the side effects?

There may be slight soreness or bruising at the needle site. Any other problems are very rare.

You may temporarily experience some numbness in the injected area or down the affected leg. Rarely does headache occur as a side effect. You should minimise physical activity for 12 hours after the injection.

Very rarely serious side effects causing permanent neurological damage occur, which are independent of operator skill. The radiologist and your referring doctor will discuss this with you when obtaining your consent.