



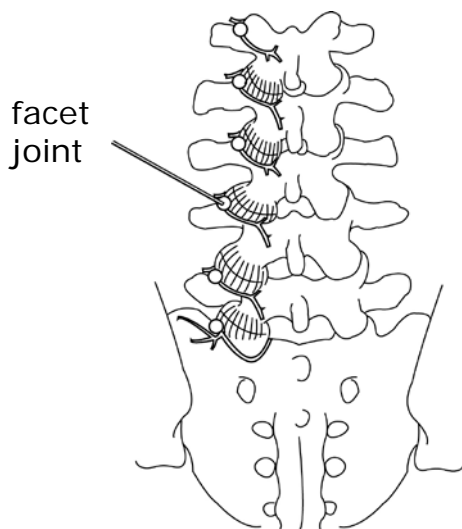
Facet Block Injection

Diagnostic Imaging
Hamilton General Hospital
905-521-2100, ext. 46514

What is a facet block injection?

Facet block injection is an injection of local anesthetic into the tissues surrounding the facet joint. Often a steroid medication is injected for longer term pain relief. A needle is placed near the facet joint. The injection is guided with an x-ray. Dye may be used to make sure the needle is in the right spot.

A facet block injection is done as a test to determine pain relief and response.



lumbar (back) spine

Before your procedure

- Eat a light meal, breakfast or lunch within a few hours before your appointment.
- Let us know if you could be pregnant as x-rays will be taken.
- If you are not able to speak or understand English, bring an interpreter with you.
- **Arrange to have a ride home.** You will be in the Diagnostic Imaging Department for about 90 minutes.

Medication

- Take your usual daily medication for pain control such as a fentanyl patch. Do not take additional pain control medication such as Tylenol.
 - Take all your other usual medications that are not for pain control.
 - Bring a list of your medications to your appointment.
 - If you have diabetes and take insulin, do not change your normal eating patterns and take your usual insulin.
 - If you take blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin, Plavix®, Aggrenox® or Ticlid®:
 - Ask the doctor who prescribed these medications for instructions on any changes that are needed before your procedure.
 - If you are taking warfarin, your referring doctor will stop this medication several days before your procedure. During this time, you may be switched to another medication.
 - If you have not heard from your referring doctor one week before your procedure, please call his or her office.
 - Stop taking ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) 5 days before your procedure.
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When you first arrive for your procedure

Go to the reception desk in the Diagnostic Imaging Department on the Main Level.

You will:

- complete a pain level questionnaire
- change into a patient gown
- talk with the nurse about any pain that you are having, medications you are taking and your activity level

Your doctor will explain the risks and benefits of this procedure. Ask your doctor questions before you sign the consent form if you do not understand the risks and benefits.

During the procedure

A nurse or technologist will be with you at all times during the procedure. You will lie on a stretcher on your stomach or side (for neck injection). Pillows may be used for positioning and comfort.

The skin on your back/neck will be cleansed with an antiseptic. The doctor will freeze a small area of skin with numbing medicine. A needle is inserted into the joint or nerve surrounding the joint. X-rays are taken to locate the facet joint. Needle positioning may be painful, especially if your facet joints are causing your pain.

Local anesthetic will be injected by the radiologist near the facet joint.

After the procedure

- You will be given a pain sheet to document your pain level after the injection. Keep the sheet and return to your doctor at your next visit.
- A nurse or technologist will show you how to complete the pain sheet.

Side effects

- Pain, numbness, itchiness or a burning sensation may occur at the injection site.
- Backache – apply ice to the injection site for 20 minutes every hour if needed. Wrap the ice pack in a towel before you apply it.
- Bruising, soreness, and swelling at the injection sites may occur and should be temporary.

When you get home

- Remove your bandage when you go to bed.
- Do not soak in a tub bath, swimming pool or hot tub for 24 hours after the injection.
- Use an ice pack wrapped in a towel for discomfort. Keep the ice pack on for only 20 minutes every hour, if needed for the next several hours.
- You can get back to your normal activities and exercises the next day.
- Take pain medication if needed.

Call your family doctor if you have:

- a severe headache
- develop a fever greater than 38°C or 100.4°F
- redness at the injection site
- severe back pain
- have new numbness or severe weakness