



Facet Joint Injections

Patient Information Sheet



What is an Image-guided Facet Injection?

The spine is made up of many bones called vertebrae. Sometimes the joints between these vertebrae become arthritic or painful. A facet injection uses a CT scanner to guide a needle into the affected joint. Local anaesthetic and an anti-inflammatory are then injected into the area of concern to reduce pain and inflammation.



What does the procedure involve?

A diagnostic CT and, on occasion, a nuclear medicine bone scan are required to find the area that may be causing the pain. After a consultation with our radiologist and completing a consent form you will be positioned by the technologist. Positioning scans will be taken. As our doctors aim to be as accurate as possible, this procedure may take up to an hour. When an appropriate injection site has been selected local anaesthetic will be placed around the area of concern to numb the area. The local anaesthetic lasts for approximately 4-6 hours. You will need someone to drive you home as you may experience some weakness from the local anaesthetic. Under guidance of a Computed Tomography (CT) a needle will be guided into the joint. When the radiologist is happy with the positioning of the needle a mixture of local anaesthetic and anti-inflammatory will be injected into the joint space.



How long does a Facet Injection last?

The degree of pain relief varies, depending on the cause and location of the pain. Pain relief can last from one to twelve months, but can last for years.



Is any follow up required?

When the procedure is finished you will be given a Pain Diary to assess how your pain feels over the next 10 days. Please complete this as accurately as possible and return it to your referring doctor.



What are the risks?

With all procedures piercing the skin, there is a small chance of infection or bleeding at the injection site. You may be required to stop blood thinners to reduce this risk.



What costs are involved?

Facet injections under CT image guidance are bulk billed by Medicare.

Do I Need a Referral?

Yes. After receiving a referral from your GP you will be booked in by staff and asked a series of questions. We may also need to see your previous imaging. You can contact our friendly staff on 5430 3955.

