

Medial Branch Block / Facet Joint Injection



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Medial Branch Blocks (MBB) and Facet Joint Injections are provided to confirm that the facet joints are indeed, the pain generator for back or neck pain. Each vertebra in the spine is connected by two facet joints. A local anesthetic numbs the skin and tissue down to facet joint.

The physician uses the fluoroscope and contrast solution to confirm correct placement of the needle tip. A mixture of anesthetic and anti-inflammatory steroid medication is injected into the joint. Sometimes two or more injections might be necessary. If the patient experiences relief following the injection, this confirms that the facet joint was the source of pain.

However, pain may return after local anesthetic effect ends. Usually it takes about a week to reduce inflammation and pain. Pain relief can last up to several months. If the patient only experiences short-lived relief, the next step in the treatment algorithm would be a radiofrequency ablation, or rhizotomy procedure. Talk with your provider about this next step.

Facet Joint Injection Side Effects:

Common side effects could be compared with common injection side effects, i.e. allergic reaction, bacterial infection, bleeding in seldom cases. Steroids side effects include swelling of the face, eyes, arms and legs, as well as increased blood sugars in diabetics.

The patient must inform the physician about pregnancy or if he/she takes blood thinning medication.

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DISCLAIMER: INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS SHEET IS GENERAL IN CONTENT AND SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE. CONCERNS OVER MEDICAL CONDITIONS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR PAIN CARE SPECIALIST.