

## **Facet joint injection**

### **What is a facet joint injection?**

Facet joints are small bony projections which are located on both sides of the rear of the spine. They connect each vertebra above and below it in the spine. These joints can become inflamed and can cause pain in the spine going to the arms and legs.

A facet joint injection is an injection of an anti-inflammatory steroid along with a local anaesthetic into the facet joints. This procedure can be used either diagnostically, to locate and confirm which joint is the cause of the pain, or as a means of relief for back pain.

### **How is the injection performed?**

The area to be injected is cleaned and local anesthetic given to numb the skin. With the help of X rays a fine needle is guided into the centre of each facet joint to be injected. The local anaesthetic and steroid is then injected. Sometimes, for more accurate diagnosis, the nerve to the joint is blocked instead. This is a medial branch block.

### **What are the benefits of Facet Joint injections?**

The main benefit is to reduce the pain by reducing the inflammation, and also by reducing the painful muscle spasms around the joint. The injection serves as a diagnostic tool to confirm which facet joint is the cause of the pain.

### **What are the risks?**

There can be soreness at the injection site, which usually settles in a few days. In some cases, there is the risk that the intervention may not work. As with any other procedure, there is a risk of introducing infection. In rare cases there can be an allergic reaction to components in the reaction mixture. There can be a temporary numbness in the legs.

### **How long will I be in hospital?**

You will be asked to attend the hospital on letter day of your procedure. A letter providing all the information will sent to you before the date of your procedure. Please ensure you arrive 2 hours before the procedure. You may be in hospital for a period of upto 6hours. Very rarely, in case of complications an overnight stay may be required.

### **What happens before the procedure?**

You may eat a light drink meal and drink normally prior to your treatment. Please arrive in good time for your appointment. Prior to the treatment, Dr Desai will explain and you will be able to ask any questions you like about your treatment. When you are completely satisfied, you will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important that you tell the doctor if:

- You are taking Aspirin, Warfaarin or other similar drugs
- You have a bleeding problem
- You are allergic to local anaesthetic
- You have any serious medical problems
- Or if you are unwell on the day.

## ***Patient Information Leaflet- The Windsor Pain Management Centre***

### **What should I expect after the procedure?**

You will normally be able to get up and walk by yourself.

There will be a period of rest after the procedure. During this time you will be able to eat and drink normally. The nurse will assess whether you are ready to go home. You should not drive yourself. You should be able to resume driving 24hrs after the procedure if you feel sufficiently recovered.

An appointment letter for follow up to see Dr Desai after 4 to 6 weeks, will already have been sent. For a few days after the the treatment, you may find that the pain is worse than before. This is due to the procedure itself

Please check the following link for a Facet Joint Block Animation Video:

<http://www.spineuniverse.com/treatments/pain-management/injections/facet-joint-block-animation>