

Information for Patients - *Facet Joint Injections* Dorset Musculoskeletal (MSK) Services

What will happen to me before the procedure?

When you arrive for your facet joint injections you will be shown into to a changing room and change into a theatre gown. Your blood pressure will be taken by a nurse, in day surgery.

What will happen to me during my procedure?

A nurse will take you from the day surgery unit into the theatre where the procedure will be done.

Once in theatre, the procedure will be explained to you and you will be given the opportunity to ask any questions.

You will then be asked to sign a consent form.

You will be asked to lie on your stomach.

An x-ray machine is used to help locate the joints where the pain is coming from.

The doctor/practitioner will feel around your back and locate the correct areas to inject and sometimes mark them.

Following this they will inject the skin with a local anaesthetic before inserting the needle into the facet joint.

Once the areas have been identified, a small amount of steroid and local anaesthetic solution will be injected into each facet joint. The injections may cause some discomfort but this will settle quickly.

Does the steroid have any side-effects?

The steroid injection is designed to stay around the facet joints and should have very little effect on the rest of your body.

However, these are possible side effects:

- Temporary increase in the pain during the injection or for 24-48 hours afterwards.
- Diabetics may notice that their blood sugar is raised for a week or so after the procedure.
- Women may notice menstrual irregularities.
- Facial flushing for up to 48hrs after the procedure.

Very occasionally the anaesthetic may affect one of the nerves, causing numbness in the leg. This normally wears off after an hour. You may need to stay in the hospital until this resolves.

You should not have this procedure using x-rays if you are pregnant, due to radiation

Will the pain go away?

Once the local anaesthetic has worn off, your pain may return. The steroid can take up to four weeks to have its full effect. Some people find that they feel a bit bruised after the procedure. This is normal and can be helped by normal pain medication.

Going home

You must not drive after the procedure and we would ask that a friend or relative would drive you home that day.

Following your facet joint injections we recommend that you go home and rest for the remainder of the day. It is also recommended that you do not drive for 12 hours after the injections.

You may take any regular medication you have, and you can take painkillers if necessary.

If you have any queries you can contact the MSK secretaries on 01305 762631.

The information in this leaflet is available in additional languages and alternative formats.
Please contact the Trust for further details.

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