

Lumbar - Thoracic Facet Injection

When your procedure has been cleared and scheduled you will be called to be reminded of the exact time and date that you are to appear at the surgical center.

We would like to remind you that you must have a driver with you and that you must not drive the day of your procedure or operate any heavy equipment. You must not eat or drink anything but water 4 hours prior to your procedure.

When you arrive at the surgical center, you will sign paperwork and then be interviewed by a nurse. The nurse will ask you about your medical conditions and the medications that you take. After she is finished with the interview, if necessary, you will be placed in a gown and an IV will be placed.

When it is time for you to have your injection, you will be transported into the procedure room where you will meet your doctor. Your doctor will ask you about how you are doing and will also verify the injection that you are scheduled for, including which side would be the appropriate side to inject if this is an issue. After this has been accomplished you will be helped onto a special cushioned table and positioned on your stomach. A monitor will be placed over your finger that will tell us about the oxygen that you have in your blood as well as your heart rate and EKG stickers will be applied to use so we can monitor your heart rhythm and heart rate.

If you wish to receive sedation, and many people do, it is at this point that we will start the sedation. Sedation is usually given slowly to be sure that you are not overly sedated. Many patients who do not take a lot of pain medications find that they fall asleep with the IV sedation. If this happens it is never a deep sleep and we can easily wake you up. The optimum level of sedation is one in which you are relaxed and breathing on your own.

In many patients who take significant amounts of pain medication the IV sedation will help you relax but it may not result in you being completely asleep. It is important to remember that IV sedation is used to relieve anxiety. None of the procedures that we do are significantly painful and generally speaking they are as uncomfortable to experience as simply getting the IV.

PROCEDURE:

Once you are properly positioned on the procedure table and once you have received IV sedation through your IV, if this is what you have requested, your physician will wash your back with a surgical scrub which is an antibacterial solution. Surgical drapes will then be placed around the area to be injected to insure that this area remains free from bacteria and sterile.

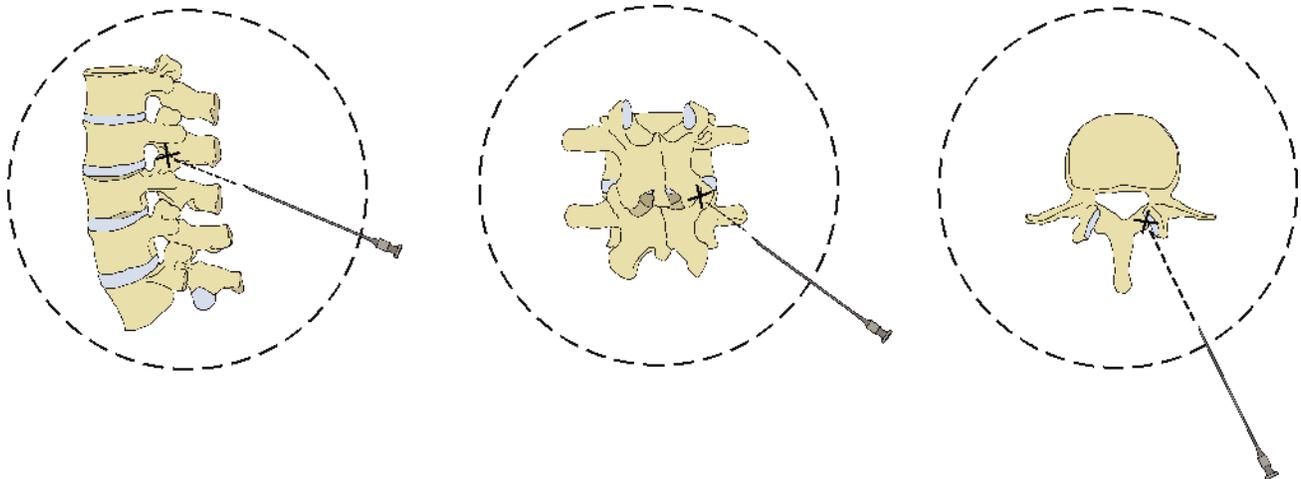
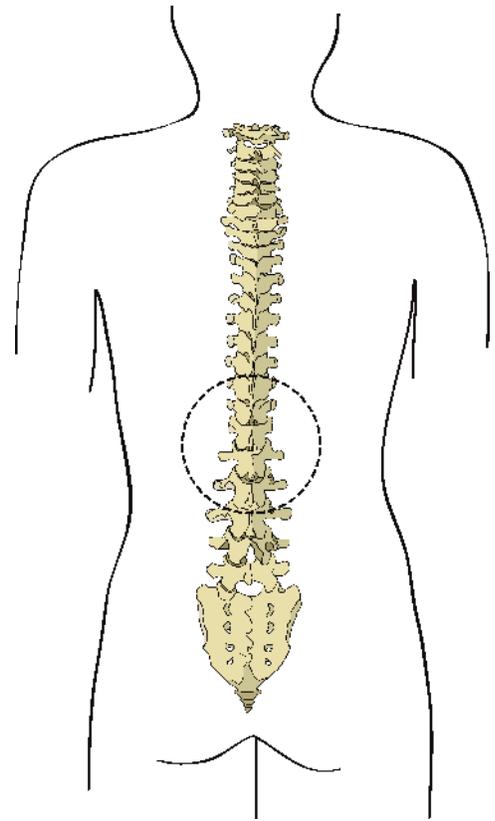
Using a slight angle on the x-ray camera we can easily visualize the facet joints that were previously shown to you in the office when you discussed this procedure. This allows the physician to identify clearly the exact joint to be injected and the space in the joint into which the needle needs to be placed. Once the appropriate side and joints have been identified a tiny needle is used to numb up the needle insertion site that is directly above each facet joint. You will feel a slight needle stick and some burning when the local anesthetic is injected. Now using real time x-ray very small needles are inserted through the numbed skin and directed directly into the appropriate facet joints. Typically the physician can feel the needle slide between the bones and into the joints. Once this has been accomplished a small amount of local anesthetic and steroid is injected into each of the selected joints. Once this is accomplished the needle is pulled back and out of the facet joint and as it passes through the muscles of your back your physician will gently inject numbing medication to be sure that your muscles are relaxed after the procedure. You may feel a slight burning as the needle comes out and this is simply the local anesthetic being injected as the needle is being removed.

Generally speaking after you leave the surgical center we do not limit your activities significantly other than to tell you that you should not drive or operate heavy machinery. If you feel well and you want to go out to lunch or go shopping this is certainly reasonable. Many people however who have been suffering with terrible pain often like to go home to sleep since they are comfortable and will sleep well.

Prior to discharge you will be provided with an instruction sheet that will inform you of possible concerns after your injection. If you are frightened or think that you are having a reaction to the injection or medications, you should immediately call our office and speak with someone on staff who will assist you. In the event that you believe that there is a very serious side effect occurring you should immediately call 911 and get immediate care.

Generally speaking the injections that are performed do require a minimum of 3-5 days to actually work. For this reason we advise you to wait 3-5 before you try to assess the effect of these injections. Our office should call you within 6-7 days after your procedure to inquire as to how you are doing and if you feel that the injections were helpful to you.

In the event that you feel that the injection has provided you with substantial benefit and that the benefit is still going on 1-2 weeks after the injection then we may want to invite you back for another injection as it is clear that the injection helped you.



In the event, however, that an injection was performed and one week later you do not feel significant relief, you may benefit from an additional injection but should first be evaluated in the office.

If your pain has not improved in any way, it makes much more sense to evaluate you and see if there is not another injection that can be performed, in a different way that will be more helpful to you than the first. There is also the possibility of not continuing any further with any type of injection.