

Frequently asked questions

Will I need to take a whole day off from work for the procedure? Yes, but you should be able to return to work the following day.

If I feel up to it, can't I just drive myself home? It is not considered safe to drive or operate other heavy machinery after this procedure. You should arrange for an adult to drive you home.

When will I be able to eat and take my medications? You should be able to resume eating and taking your medications after the procedure.

How soon after the procedure can I bathe? It is okay to take a shower that evening, but avoid taking a bath, being in a hot tub, or swimming until the following day.

When will I be able to remove the bandage? If you have a bandage, you will be able to remove it the evening of the procedure.

What are the possible complications? Although they are rare, some complications can occur. You may feel temporary pain at the injection site, and a cold pack can be applied for comfort that day, or if discomfort persists, some moist heat. Serious complications are very rare, but may include bleeding, infection, and nerve damage. If you have a severe increase in pain, develop a fever or chills, or have redness or swelling near the injection site, have someone take you to the nearest emergency room to be evaluated for procedure complications or an infection.

Facet Joint Block



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Call 419-625-4900 to schedule an appointment at any location.



This procedure may be recommended for patients experiencing an extended period of pain in their back or neck. Facet joints are the small joints located between each vertebra that provide the spine with both stability and flexibility. These joints can become inflamed or irritated, and this injection is a precise way of applying an anesthetic and possibly a corticosteroid medication to the nerves that provide sensation to the facet joints. Patients who report relief from this procedure provides confirmation to the physician that the facets are the source of the pain. Examples of patients who may benefit from this procedure might be those who are experiencing pain in their neck, mid back, or low back that is not due to other potential conditions such as degenerated or herniated discs.

This procedure is done for diagnostic purposes, and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Preparation for the procedure and recovery from the injection will take additional time.

What to expect

- An evaluation from a pain management physician
- A detailed description of the procedure
- A discussion about potential risks, benefits, and any alternative treatments
- An opportunity to have all of your concerns addressed and questions answered to your satisfaction

Planning for the procedure

- Do not eat solid food for at least 6 hours prior to the procedure
- You may have clear liquids up until 2 hours prior to the procedure
- You may take your prescribed medications for other medical conditions with a small sip of water the morning of the procedure.
- If you are taking a blood thinner medication, please ask the physician who prescribed the medication for directions on stopping it prior to scheduling the procedure
- Do not take pain medication on the day of your procedure. If you are taking an opiate medication for pain, please ask the pain management physician on how best to schedule taking them.
- If you take a diabetic medication, you will need to discuss with your primary care doctor how best to take your medicine since you will be going without food for at least six hours.
- Bring all your medications with you. You will be able to take them as usual after the procedure
- Tell the doctor or staff about any allergies that you have, including medications, seafood, shellfish, latex, or x-ray dyes.

The day of the procedure

When you arrive:

- Someone will verify that you have followed the planning instructions and that you have a ride home with an adult driver
- You will have an IV (intravenous) line placed to provide fluids and a medication to help you relax, if needed.
- You will be asked to lie on your stomach or side (depending on the location of the pain) on the operating table, and equipment to monitor your heart rate, blood pressure, and oxygen will be applied.
- The affected area will be washed with a sterile scrub
- Your skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic for comfort
- X-ray images will be used to guide the proper placement of the needle
- Once the site is located, a medication to numb the nerve and possibly a steroid will be injected

Immediately after the procedure:

- You will be in a recovery room for 30-60 minutes for observation
- A nurse will check your vital signs, and you will be offered a snack
- You will be given discharge instructions
- You will be asked to immediately begin reporting the level and duration of the pain relief, and may be asked to keep a record of your pain levels on a regular basis