BACK + BODY
MEDICAL

Facet Joint Steroid Injection

Facet joint steroid injections are a powerful, rapid and effective treatment for acute or chronic pain and inflammation of your facet joints. We can do facet joint injections in the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine.

We have used Facet joint steroid injections to support our patient's recovery for years and have had amazing testimonials from those we have helped!

Getting you back ***to your best***

What is a facet joint steroid injection?

Facet joint steroid injections can be administered into the cervical, thoracic and lumbar parts of the spine, targeting the specific facet joint causing the symptoms. The anti-inflammatory steroid mimics the body's own natural steroids, working to reduce swelling and the symptoms it can cause. The injectate contains a mixture of local anaesthetic and steroid, for immediate and longer term relief. This can support diagnosis as well as longer term treatment and rehabilitation.

What conditions do facet joint steroid injections help with?

There are a wide range of symptoms that can be treated with steroid injections into the facet joints of the spine. Localised neck pain with muscle spasm, pain radiating up to the head or headaches, localised lumbar pain with muscle spasm or pain radiating from the back to the buttock and even into the upper thigh can all be caused by inflammation, degeneration or injury to the facet joints and the surrounding ligaments. This can be referred to as facet joint dysfunction, facet joint syndrome or mechanical back pain.

If this sounds familiar, we may be able to help! Research has shown that patients treated with steroid injections experienced reduced symptoms and improved function, with 78% returning to normal activities and rehabilitation sooner.

THE PROCEDURE

Before the procedure

At your initial consultation, the doctor will take time to understand your symptoms and undertake a thorough assessment to ensure the injection is right for you. It is important to let the doctor know of any known allergies, such as plasters and to inform us if you are pregnant. Please also let the doctor know if you have any medical conditions and take any regular medications including blood thinning medications. This is also a great opportunity to ask the doctor any questions you may have about the procedure.

Before having your treatment eat and drink as normal, including taking any regular medication (unless otherwise advised by the doctor, e.g. blood thinning medication) and wear loose comfortable clothing.

What to expect during the procedure

The doctor will explain everything to you before your procedure and ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you are happy to proceed.

All spinal injections are performed using our high-tech fluoroscopic x-ray for guidance and precision, by using this image guidance for accuracy and safety, the doctor can be confident the injectate is being delivered to the correct facet joints of the spine.

Local anaesthetic is used on the injection point to make the procedure as comfortable as possible for you, once the position has been checked with a special dye, visible on x-ray, the steroid will be injected. Some patients experience feelings of pressure as the fluid is injected, however are often surprised at how quick and comfortable the process is.

AFTER CARE ADVICE

Wound care: You will likely have a small plaster on the injection site. You can shower as normal the following morning but please avoid soaking in baths or hot tubs for at least 48 hrs. You can remove the dressing after 24 hrs.

Rest: Studies have shown a period of rest may improve the effect of the injection. It is advised to follow relative rest of the area for 2 days and then to avoid strenuous activity, such as heavy lifting for up to 2 weeks.

Pain relief: Occasionally people notice a flare-up in their pain within the first 24 hours of the injection. This often rights itself after just a couple of days, but taking simple pain relief like paracetamol will help. You can also apply an ice pack (10 mins 1x per hour- remember to protect your skin from direct contact with the ice).

Can I drive after the injection? We often say that if you can drive here you can drive home, (unless you are having a nerve block procedure). However if you feel more comfortable bringing someone to drive you home then we will welcome them into the clinic and even offer them a cup of tea!

Follow up: It is strongly advised to book in to see your physiotherapist at the Back and Body Clinic around 7 days after your injection so they can support the next stage of your recovery and progress your rehab to get you back to your best!

The injection has not worked, what should I do? Please rest assured that our team will support you. There are often many more treatment options to be explored, in addition to the possibility of repeating the steroid injection. Get in touch with our team and we can discuss the next steps.

"Right from my first telephone enquiry, the clinic were so helpful putting me in for treatment within a couple of days. I had been in huge discomfort for nearly two years and could not stand the pain anymore. The whole process was professional, quick and simple and the results have been great. I can now sleep once more without being woken every night." **Lauren**

EXPECTATIONS

How long will it take to work?

The steroid medication will usually take 48-72 hours to take effect. In some cases the benefit may appear almost immediately, in others it can build up gradually over a week to 14 days.

How long will it last for?

We have seen patients make a full recovery with facet joint injections time and time again. This is even more likely when patients have also benefited from the guidance of our experienced therapists who specialise in treating back pain.

However, this is not always the case sometimes we see patients symptoms return after 3 months or so. If you do feel the effects wearing off sooner than you would have liked, please don't worry! If the pain relief is short- lived but significant, the injection can either be safely be repeated to give a longer- lasting effect or there is a treatment for facet joint pain that has been proven to provide longer term relief. This treatment is radiofrequency denervation (see leaflet for more info on this treatment).

COMPLICATIONS

While it is a very safe procedure and every precaution is taken to minimise risk, some complications may still occur in a very small number of cases.

Very rarely you may get an infection from the injection. Please watch out for any redness, swelling, a fever or a severe increase in pain. This is very uncommon and the risk is around 1:20,000.

There is 1:7,000 risk of bleeding, bruising, localised infection or an allergic reaction such as a rash, shortness of breath and dizziness.

Other possible side effects are facial flushing, temporary changes to a women's menstrual cycle and changes in mood. It is also common to see a rise in blood sugar levels for a few days after the injection if you have diabetes.

If you are worried about any of the above, please discuss this with your doctor.

If you have any concerns regarding your procedure during clinic opening hours please contact us directly on **01604 439066.**

If you are concerned out of clinic hours, then please contact **111** or go straight to the closest A&E department.

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