

After your injection

After the injection you will be taken back to the day surgery unit where you will be advised to rest for about 30 minutes. During this time the clinic nurse will assess you, to ensure that you are ready to return home.

How will I feel?

You will experience back discomfort for a few days and may feel 'bruised'. We normally suggest taking things gently during this time. Please use your usual analgesics as prescribed.

The pain relieving effect of these injections may not be apparent for up to two weeks. If pain relief following the injections is disappointing for you, it probably suggests that although the facet joint inflammation has been treated the muscle pain and lack of function is the on-going problem. This can and usually will improve over time.

What happens next?

Follow up arrangements will be discussed with you prior to discharge from hospital. For further information or advice, contact DHC on:

01306 735459

Contact Details

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact DHC on:

01306 735459



Dorking Hospital
Off St Paul's Road West, Horsham Road,
Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2AA
Tel: 01306 735259 Fax: 01306 883492

www.dhcclinical.com

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REGISTERED OFFICE: THE SURGERY, TANNERS MEADOW,
BROCKHAM, SURREY, RH3 7NJ



Patient information leaflet

Facet Joint Injections



Pain Management Department



This leaflet will help you to understand more about facet joint injections. If you have any further questions or if there is anything you do not understand, please feel free to ask any of the nurses or your doctor.

What are facet joints?

Facet joints are small, paired joints (left and right) located along the length of your spine that link the vertebrae together. If the joints are worn, traumatised, subject to repeated stress or inflamed they may give rise to pain. This can lead to stiffness, muscle weakness and loss of movement.

One way of finding out whether facet joints are the source of pain is to perform facet joint injections. This involves injecting local anaesthetic (to numb) and steroid (anti-inflammatory) around the small nerves to the facet joints under x-ray guidance to see if the pain is reduced.

What are the benefits of facet joint injections?

Facet joint injections aim to reduce pain by treating the inflammation around the joint. This will allow you to start increasing your exercise regime to strengthen the muscles and begin normal movement again.

Does the injection have any risks or side effects?

Injections are safe and unlikely to result in a complication, but no injection is 100% foolproof. Facet joint injections are safe and simple; with x-ray guidance the chances of harm are small. Precautions are always taken to minimise the risk as far as possible. The steroids should have very little effect on the body. However:

- People who have diabetes may find that their blood sugars become worse for a few days.
- Some women experience facial flushing lasting a few days, and menstruation (periods) can become irregular for a month or two.

What are the alternatives to facet joint injections ?

Alternatives will have been discussed with you at your consultation. These can include measures such as physiotherapy, medication and acupuncture.

Before your injection

Your injection will take place at a local day surgery unit. Please arrive in good time for your appointment and allow time for car parking at the hospital. We don't recommend that you drive yourself home, so please arrange to have someone with you or to collect you.

On arrival at the clinic

Please report to the reception of the Day Surgical Unit. You will then be shown into the waiting area, until you are called.

Prior to the injection you will be assessed by the nursing staff who will ask you basic information about your health. Your blood pressure and pulse will also be recorded.

Prior to the injection the doctor or nurse will explain the treatment. You will be able to ask any questions you like about the treatment. When you are completely satisfied, you will be asked to sign a form giving your consent.

How is the injection performed

You will need to undress and put on a hospital gown prior to being escorted to the treatment room for the injection. You will be asked to lie face down onto the x-ray table and to expose the relevant area.

The skin is cleaned with an antiseptic solution. The skin over each joint to be treated is injected with a local anaesthetic; this may sting a little. The doctor will then position a fine needle into the joint under x-ray guidance. Once in position the injection is given.