



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Facet Block

Facet joints are the joints that connect two vertebrae. There are two facet joints for each vertebra. Arthritis can occur in facet joints. Back pain, pain that occurs in your side when bending and twisting or pain that spreads to your thigh can occur when arthritis occurs in facet joints.

When is a facet block used?

A facet block is used when a person has back pain that has clinical and radiological evidence of a disease or abnormal condition affecting the facet joint.

When happens during a facet block?

You will be asked to lie face down on the x-ray table. An x-ray picture will be obtained to help the doctor locate the position of the facet joints. You will be given a local anesthetic to numb the skin and deep tissues surrounding the facet joints. Once the area is numb a needle is inserted into the area near the facet joint and the position is checked with an x-ray. A local anesthetic and a steroid solution is injected into the area. This will numb the nerve that supplies the facet joint and is called a nerve block. Pain relief can occur right away.

What are the side effects and risks?

Possible side effects and risks are:

- There may be pain at site of injection.
- Nerve irritation and numbness of the legs can occur.
- The medicine used for the block can go into a blood vessel.
- Very rarely, the medication can be injected into the spinal fluid.

What do I need to do after the procedure?

- Apply ice and then heat to decrease the injection site pain.
- You will need someone to drive you home.