

Cervical Facet Injection

Cervical facet joints are small joints located in pairs on the back/side of your neck. These joints provide stability and guide motion in your spine. Cervical facet injections can help diagnose the source of your pain and can help to provide long-term pain relief.

Conditions treated

You might benefit from a cervical facet injection and radiofrequency ablation if you suffer from:

- Cervical facet pain
- Chronic neck pain
- Neck pain
- Shoulder pain
- Spondylolisthesis

Duration

30 minutes

How is it performed?

Prior to the steroid injection, you will lie on your stomach, and the injection site will be cleaned and numbed with a local anesthetic. To ensure proper needle placement, your physician will utilize fluoroscopic x-ray technology when inserting the needle. Once the needle is inserted, your physician will inject a mixture of numbing medicine and corticosteroid.

Prior to your appointment

You should continue taking all medications except blood thinners before the procedure. Please see your medication handout to know when to hold and resume these medications or ask your doctor.

What are some of the risks and side effects?

This procedure is a relatively safe, non-surgical treatment, with minimal risks of complications. Some of the most common or possible risks and side effects are:

- From the steroid medication –
 - Muscle cramping, increased appetite, flushing, headache, elevated blood sugar and nausea, which can last up to 2 weeks.
 - Within the first 1-3 days, patients may develop flushing, red face and a headache, which is related to the steroid medication itself.
- Dizziness, weakness in the extremities, seizure and stroke.
- If you have congestive heart failure or are prone to fluid retention, you should monitor your weight each day after the procedure and call your doctor if you have a weight gain of more than 3 pounds.
- If you have glaucoma and experience blurred vision, you should call your ophthalmologist to have your eye pressures checked.
- Hiccups and temporary weakness in the legs have been reported, but are very infrequent.

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What to expect after the procedure

After the injection, you may feel a weak or numb sensation where the medication was injected. As the numbing medication wears off over the first couple days after the procedure, you may experience an increase in pain. Once the steroid begins to work and the inflammation improves, you should experience pain relief. This can take up to 3-4 weeks.

Ice is typically more helpful than heat during the first two to three days after the injection.

You should not drive or engage in physical activity for 24 hours following the procedure.

You may resume taking medications (except blood thinners) and regular eating habits immediately. Please see your medication handout to know when to hold and resume these medications or ask your doctor.

Slowly ease back into exercise routines over a period of 1-2 weeks.

You should call your doctor if you experience a fever over 101 within 72 hours of the procedure.

You will be able to walk after the procedure, but you should not engage in rigorous activity for 24 hours.

