

Thoracic Facet Injection

Thoracic facet joints are small joints located in pairs along the entire spine. These joints provide stability and guide motion in your spine. Thoracic facet injections can help to diagnose the source of your pain and can help to provide long-term pain relief.

Conditions treated

You may benefit from a thoracic facet injection if you suffer from:

- Chronic mid-back pain
- Chest wall pain
- Spondylolisthesis/spondylosis
- Arthritis in the intrathoracic joints

Duration

Less than 30 minutes

How is it performed?

Prior to the steroid injection, the area will be cleaned and local anesthetic will be used to numb the injection site. To ensure proper needle placement, the physician will use x-ray technology when inserting the needle. Once the needle is inserted, the physician will inject a dye to confirm needle placement. Next, a mixture of numbing medicine and corticosteroid is injected. Your vital signs will be monitored for the duration of the procedure.

Prior to your procedure

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.

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 side effects are:

- weakness in legs
- infection
- increased pain

What to expect after the procedure

You may feel a weak or numb sensation where the numbing medication was injected. As it wears off over the first couple days, you may experience some pain. Once the steroid begins to work, you should experience pain relief. Ice is typically more helpful than heat during the first few days after the injection.

You should not drive for 24 hours following the procedure. Slowly ease back into exercise routines over a period of one-two weeks.

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You should resume medications and regular eating habits immediately. Please see your medication handout to know when to hold and resume blood thinners.

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

