



THORACIC FACET JOINT INJECTIONS

What are thoracic facet joints and why are facet joint injections helpful?

Thoracic facet joints are small joints located in pairs on the back of the thoracic spine. If the joints become painful they may cause pain in the mid back, ribs or chest. A facet joint injection serves two purposes. First, if the anesthetic (numbing) medication placed into the joint causes immediate pain relief, this will help confirm the joint as a source of pain. Next, the steroid medication will help reduce inflammation within the joint and may lead to longer pain relief. The response may be used to help plan for a more permanent way of providing pain relief.

What happens during the procedure?

You will lie face down on a procedure table. The physician will use fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance to visualize the facet joint. The physician will scrub your skin with sterile soap and place a drape on your back. The physician will numb a small area of skin with anesthetic medication. After the anesthetic has been given time to be effective, the physician will then direct a very small needle using fluoroscopic guidance into the facet joint. The physician will inject a small amount of contrast (dye) to insure proper needle position and then a small mixture of anesthetic and steroid into the joint. One or more joints may be injected depending on the location of your typical pain.

What happens after the procedure?

Immediately after the procedure, you will go to a recovery area where you will be asked to rate your pain on a pain scale. You may be asked to move around and try to imitate something that would normally bring about your typical pain. You may be provided with a pain log in order to rate your pain relief for the next several hours after the procedure. The physician will use this information to plan for your further care. Of note, your mid back, ribs or chest may feel weak or numb for up to several hours after the procedure.

General Pre-op and Post-op Instructions:

- You will be scheduled at one of the facilities listed below. You will be at the facility approximately 1-1.5 hours total.
- You will be required to have a responsible adult drive you home.
- You should take your routine medications (ie. blood pressure, diabetic medications) the day of your procedure.
- If you are taking Coumadin or blood thinners, please notify the office immediately.
- You must not eat any food six hours prior to your appointment.
- You may have sips of clear liquids up to two hours prior to your appointment
- You may want to wear loose, comfortable clothing to your appointment.
- You may return to your normal activities the day after your procedure, including returning to work.

Location of Procedures:

- Desert Spine and Sports Phoenix office: 3700 N 24th Street, Ste 210. Phoenix, AZ 85016
- Desert Spine and Sports Mesa Office: 6634 E. Baseline Rd., Suite 101 Mesa, AZ 85206
- Desert Spine and Sports Scottsdale office: 8670 E Shea Blvd Suite 102, Scottsdale AZ 85260

If you need to reschedule this appointment, please give 24 hours notice and call **602-840-0681**.