

PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICE
DIAGNOSTIC FACET JOINT INJECTIONS

The facet joint blocks, which your pain management doctor will be performing for you, are performed primarily as a diagnostic procedure. The doctor wants to assess whether your pain arises from the joints that have been tested. Occasionally long term relief occurs following facet joint injection. This is a 'bonus effect' that is seen in about 30% of patients and can last for weeks or even months.

The block (test injection) is performed by placing the point of the needle with precision (under x-ray) down to the nerve that supplies the joint and then injecting a small amount of local anaesthetic solution.

If you are pain free (or your pain is significantly reduced) for some hours while the local anaesthetic is working, it is an indication that your pain is likely to arise from the joints that were tested. It is quite common to have increased pain for a couple of days when the pain returns and then for it to get better for some days, occasionally longer. You may need to take some pain killers if your pain is worse. It is advisable that you avoid heavy lifting for a week or two after the injections.

You should carefully note any changes in pain, especially during the first six hours and also during the following days. It is recommended that you carefully test the effect of today's blocks by doing things that are normally painful

Please remember that today's injection is a test procedure and not intended as a treatment. If your pain returns the day after or if it is worse for a few days then it does not mean that today's procedure was a failure. **The only way of knowing if the right structure was tested is by assessing if your pain was considerably reduced during the hours following the test block.** Such a temporary relief indicates that the test block was **successful** and that further treatment can be planned that hopefully will provide long lasting relief.

Evaluation of diagnostic facet joint injections

The injections that have been performed are aiming to test if your pain comes from the structures around where you were injected. It is therefore very important that you note the effect on your pain after today's test blocks. We would like you to think about your pain level and mark it with an X on the chart below.

Name of patient : _____ Date of birth/Unit No. : _____

Type of injection: _____

Time of injection: _____ Date: _____

Pain Evaluation

Please indicate how much of your 'normal' pain you have left at every time interval as per the chart.

If your pain is increased then please mark with an X in the square on the right.

	No pain	-	Starting pain	More pain
Before the block 100% (This is your pain today)	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immediately after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 hour after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 hours after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 hours after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 hours after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 hours after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 hours after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 week after block	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>
At follow up	●	_____	●	<input type="checkbox"/>

When did the pain return to your 'usual' level? Date: _____ Time: _____

Please post or email this in a week – Address/Email