

Facet Joint Injections

You have been scheduled for a: _____.

Date of procedure: _____.

Time: _____.

Please check into Radiology at UW Hospital 15 minutes before your scheduled visit.

If you cannot make this visit, please call the Radiology Clinic at (608) 263-9729.

Your doctor has ordered a facet joint injection to help improve your pain. This will also help find the cause of your low back pain. How much relief patients feel varies. You may not feel any pain relief. Many get a decrease in pain or are pain free for two weeks to more than one year.

You **cannot** have this treatment if you:

- Have an active infection, such as a cold or sinus infection.
- May be pregnant.
- Weigh over 440 lbs.
- Have certain heart conditions.
- Have poorly controlled diabetes.

You must have an MRI or CT scan of your spine before treatment within 2 years. If you have diabetes, the steroids used for the facet joint injection may cause your blood sugar to increase. Make sure your primary care doctor is aware of your scheduled injection and that you have a plan to keep your blood sugar within your normal range.

The doctor or other healthcare provider will discuss the plan to manage your pain. This may include bringing your prescribed pain medicine from home.

You must have someone drive you home after your treatment. Some patients have weakness in their legs after treatment.

Day of Treatment

Enter the hospital through the clinic entrance. Ask the staff at the information desk near the entrance to direct you to Radiology.

If you have an MRI or CT from another hospital, **please bring it with you** for the Radiologist to review and arrive 1 hour early.

The Radiologist will meet you in a consult room to explain the risks and benefits. You will have a chance to ask questions before your treatment. Your treatment will take about 45 minutes. You will lie on your stomach. We will insert a fine needle into your back to place medicine into the facet joint of the spine.

After Treatment

Serious problems after a facet joint injection are rare. Most often, patients do not have any problems after treatment. There is a slight risk of infection or bleeding in the spine.

For 1-2 days after treatment, you **may** have:

- Back or leg pain that is worse for a brief time.
- Redness and flushing of the face.
- Fluid gain for 1-2 days, which may affect breathing if you have heart problems.
- High blood sugars if you have diabetes.

Some patients may have a change in their menstrual cycle. They may have spotting between periods. If your period changes for more than 2 cycles, you should call your doctor to see if you need to be checked.

Activities and Pain Relief

After your treatment, you **must** take the rest of the day off from work. Please plan for this.

- Avoid any strenuous activity or heavy lifting for 24 hours.
- You may return to your normal routine after 24 hours or as soon as you are able.
- You may take the medicines that you use for your low back pain.
- We will give you a pain log to complete for the next 14 days. Please complete this log form and mail it back to us. We will need this to decide the next step in your treatment plan.
- Once your pain log is complete, please contact the staff of the clinic who ordered your treatment to let them how much pain relief you have had. Please contact them sooner if you have any questions about more treatment.

When to Call

- Pain that gets worse in your low back.
- Chills or fever greater than 100.4° F (by mouth) for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Redness that gets worse or swelling around the site.
- Drainage from the site where the needle was placed.
- Ongoing leg weakness.

Who to Call

For questions or concerns, please talk with the radiologist at: **(608) 263-9729** option #3.

After hours, nights, weekends, and holidays, please call **(608) 263-6400** and ask for the radiology resident on-call. Leave your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, please call **1-800-323-8942**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2023. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#5243.