

How do I take care of myself at home?

- **Do not** take a bath, go swimming, or use a hot tub for the next 24 hours. You may shower any time.
- Remove the bandage(s) 24 hours after the procedure or if it becomes wet (i.e., if you take a shower).
- If the injection site is painful, apply ice or a cold pack over the injection site no more than 15 minutes at a time, about two to three times each day as needed.
- You can take an anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen, or medication that you normally take for pain.
- You may eat and drink as usual.
- Resume your regular activities. Avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours.

When to get help

Contact your primary care provider or the pain program if you have:

- fever above 38.5°C (101°F)
- loss of function or feeling in legs or arms
- headache that does not go away
- any local pain, swelling, and/or redness at the injection site

If your primary care provider is unavailable, go to the nearest emergency department.

Locations

Royal Jubilee Hospital
Memorial Pavilion 2nd floor
1952 Bay Street, Victoria
Tel: 250-519-1836

Central Island Pain Program
Nanaimo Regional General Hospital 2nd Floor
1200 Dufferin Crescent, Nanaimo
Tel: 250-739-5978

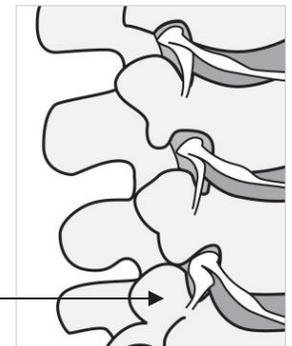


Island Health Pain Program Website:
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-services/pain-program-services/pain-program>



Facet Joint Injection

Pain Management Clinic



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What is a Facet Joint Injection?

This procedure involves injecting a small amount of local anesthetic (similar to dental freezing) and/or steroid medication around a facet joint.

Facet joints are small joints on the sides of bones that make up your spine, called vertebrae. They help stabilize your back when bending and twisting. Nerves come off your spinal cord close to these joints on their way to other parts of the body.

The joints can become painful due to arthritis, a back injury, or mechanical stress to the back. Injections can be done anywhere along the spine (e.g., neck, upper back, or lower back).

Who completes the procedure?

The physician will explain and complete the procedure, which takes about 15 minutes.

Will I be asleep for this procedure?

- No, you are awake during the procedure.
- The physician uses local anesthetic (numbing medication) to treat the targeted area.

Can I bring a relative/friend?

Yes, a relative or friend can stay with you before and after the procedure. However, for safety reasons, they cannot be in the room with you during the procedure.

How do I prepare for this?

- You may eat and drink, but restrict your intake to a light meal before your procedure.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing that is easy to remove, if needed.
- Unless instructed otherwise, do not stop taking your regular medications.
- Tell the pain program doctor and nurses if you have any allergies, such as the contrast dye used for x-ray procedures or local anesthetics.

Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive or escort you home after the procedure, or else your procedure may be cancelled.

What happens during the procedure?

You lie on your stomach on the x-ray table.

The area to be injected will be cleaned with antiseptic solution (that can be clear or pink in color).

The physician:

- Injects numbing medicine (local anesthetic) into the area where the needle will be inserted.
- Injects steroid medication into the area around the facet joint.
- Places a small bandage over the area when the procedure is complete.

What happens after the procedure?

We move you to the recovery area to rest for about 10 minutes. You might feel some heaviness in your legs. We will check your muscle function and sensation before you leave.

Are there any side effects or risks?

There could be soreness or bruising at the injection site. Possible complications such as infection, bleeding, and nerve damage are rare.

Short-term side effects (lasting about one to three days) from injected steroid can include:

- facial flushing
- mild heart palpitations
- feeling anxious or restless
- headache
- increase in blood sugar
- increase in blood pressure

Long-term side effects from injected steroid can include:

- osteoporosis
- suppression of your immune system (delayed healing)
- fluid retention and weight gain

How will this change my pain?

The anesthetic around the joint usually wears off in first 24 hours after the procedure.

Steroid medication usually starts to work within 2 to 7 days, however it can take up to 14 days to notice improvement. The duration of pain relief depends on the person. It could last for only days or for months.