

INFORMATION SHEET - FACET, SACROILIAC JOINT & EPIDURAL INJECTIONS

Facet joints are a series of small joints at the back of your spine. Sacroiliac joints are 2 large joints at the back of your pelvis. Both facet and sacroiliac joints can become painful when injury or wear and tear damage them. Joint injections can be useful in identifying precisely where the pain is coming from so that more accurate and effective treatments can be provided. Epidural injections are done into a narrow space of the spine adjacent to the spinal nerves and discs. They help identify which nerve is irritated and can reduce the pain from that nerve.

Procedure:

1. Your appointment will be booked at CAPRI Clinic - #1 – 6220 Hwy 2A Lacombe, AB where we have fluoroscopy x-ray equipment.
2. The injection may be done using either ultrasound or a special x-ray technique called fluoroscopy. This is necessary to properly guide the needle to the joint or epidural space
3. You will lie on your stomach or side and the skin overlying the part of the spine to be injected will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution.
4. Once the needle is in the correct location, the doctor will do the injections. The medicine to be injected may include freezing, cortisone, x-ray dye or regenerative products (ie. platelet rich plasma “PRP” or bone marrow aspirate concentrate “BMAC stem cells”). A small amount of X-ray contrast dye may also be injected to confirm the proper placement of the needle.
5. Most patients feel only mild pain during the injection.
6. The procedure takes 15 – 30 minutes.
7. A ride home is recommended especially if epidural or neck facet joints are being injected.
8. **If you are having an epidural injection and are on anti-inflammatories or blood thinners, there is a greater risk of serious bleeding. Therefore, you may need to stop anti-inflammatories or blood thinners. Please notify us if you are scheduled for an epidural and are on a blood thinner or anti-inflammatory medication. (Examples of anti-inflammatories are Ibuprofen, Naproxen and Aspirin. Some common blood thinners are Xeralto, Eliquis and Coumadin)**
9. You can resume normal daily activities after the procedure.

Risks:

Problems from these injections are rare but include:

- major bleeding (rare)
- infection (rare)
- allergic reaction to medication or contrast dye (rare in the absence of specific allergy history)
- increased pain (2 –3 days maximum)
- nerve damage (rare): temporary arm or leg numbness or weakness occasionally occurs
- punctured lung (rare): this is only a risk for injections of the facet joints of the “thoracic spine” (the part of the spine that attaches to the rib cage)
- stroke or spinal cord injury (extremely rare)
- **Please notify Dr. Burnham if you are on blood thinners, have a bleeding disorder, allergy to freezing (local anaesthetic) or X-ray contrast dye, if you are pregnant (if you are actively trying and it is 10 days past the first day of your last menstrual cycle, you should contact the clinic to see if you are able to proceed), or if you currently have an infection.**