

## **If you are taking Coumadin or Plavix (or related products) you should have stopped it 7 days prior to this procedure.**

caused by inflammation / irritation of the joint and surrounding structures. The fluoroscope allows pinpointing the pain source safely and effectively. This also allows less use of steroid dose and number of procedures done per patient. By getting to the source of the pain and controlling it, the body is given a chance to recover from the pain, avoid drug dependence, disability and improve quality of life. It also helps in diagnosing and identifying the source of the pain. In most cases patients can live with the condition they have and avoid surgery.

### **HOW LONG DOES THE INJECTION TAKE?**

The actual injection takes only a few minutes, but plan to spend 1-1.5 hours at the facility.

### **WHAT IS ACTUALLY INJECTED?**

The injection consists of a mixture of local anesthetic (lidocaine) and the steroid medication (preservative free triamcinolone – Kenalog®).

### **WILL THE INJECTION(S) HURT?**

The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and deeper tissues (like a "tetanus shot"). So, there is some discomfort involved. However, we numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle prior to inserting the Epidural needle. IV sedation is used in most cases to provide relaxation, but you will not be "put out" for the procedure. If you undergo IV sedation you will have food and water restrictions (see last page "REMEMBER")

### **HOW IS THE INJECTION PERFORMED?**

It is done with the patient lying on the stomach or on your side, under x-ray control. The patients are

monitored with blood pressure cuff and blood oxygen-monitoring device, in most cases under monitored anesthetic care.

### **WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER THE INJECTION?**

Immediately after the injection, you may feel some soreness. Also, you may notice that your pain may be gone or quite less. This is due to the local anesthetic injected. This will last only for a few hours. Your pain will return and you may have a "sore back" for a day or two. This is due to the mechanical process of needle insertion as well as initial irritation from the steroid itself. The cortisone starts working in about **1 to 5 days** and its effect can last for several days, months or even years.

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE PROCEDURE?**

Make sure to make an appointment to see us in follow up 2-3 weeks after each injection to decide the future course of treatment options. You should have a ride home. Please **DO NOT** plan to drive or perform activities needing coordination right after the procedure. You do not need to stay in bed; you can walk and do activities as tolerated, but do not resume strenuous physical work even if you feel better. You should be able to return to non physical work, check with your doctor.

### **HOW MANY INJECTIONS DO I NEED TO HAVE?**

If the first injection does not relieve your symptoms in about a week to two weeks, you may be recommended to have one more injection or a nerve block. For longer lasting pain relief Facet denervation therapy using Radiofrequency energy

can be indicated. Ask your doctor if you are a candidate for this specialized treatment.

### **WILL THE FACET JOINT INJECTIONS OR NERVE BLOCKS HELP ME?**

In most cases it will not stop all back or neck pain. Mostly it will reduce pain 50% or more than before. Some patients may feel more relief from an injection than others, while some patients may need more than one injection or nerve blocks to consider future longer lasting therapies. Facet denervation uses radiofrequency energy to temporarily interrupt or destroy nerves that carry pain signals arising from the facet joint. These nerves are called medial branches.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS?**

Generally speaking, this procedure is safe. However, with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and possibility of complications. The most common side effect is pain – which is temporary. The other rare risks may include infection, bleeding, spinal puncture with headaches, nerve injury etc. *In over 15 years of practice, Dr. Gopal has performed over 15,000 spinal procedures on patients with no reported serious complications.*

### **WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE THIS INJECTION?**

If you are allergic to any of the medications to be injected, or if you have an active infection or illness going on, you should not have the injection.

### **CERTAIN MEDICATIONS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF COMPLICATIONS.**

\* If you are on Coumadin (warfarin), Heparin, Aggrenox, Lovenox (enoxaparin), Ticlid

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(ticlopidine), Plavix (clopidogrel), Pradaxa (dabigatran), Eliquis (apixaban), Xaralto (rivaroxaban) OR Other BLOOD THINNING products you will need to get a medical clearance allowing you to stop your medication from your primary physician or cardiologist, prior to your scheduled procedure. **DO NOT STOP TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS UNTIL WE CALL AND NOTIFY YOU THAT YOU HAVE A MEDICAL CLEARANCE.** You can continue to use Celebrex and your pain medicines before the procedure. You should continue to **TAKE YOUR ROUTINE MEDICATIONS** (high blood pressure and diabetes medications) before the procedure. If you are on antibiotics please notify us, he may wait to do the procedure. You can resume taking these the next day after the procedure.

**REMEMBER:**

- **This and all Procedures are performed at New York Advanced Surgical Intervention Care – 2008 Eastchester Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> level Suite B, Bronx, NY 10461**
- **Please DO NOT stop taking your blood pressure, diabetic, insulin, or cardiac medicines.**
- **Please do not bring any valuables with you day of procedure as you undergo anesthesia**
- **Have adult drive or take personalized taxi service to return to your home.**
- **Wear loose, comfortable 2 piece clothing.**
- **If you are diabetic, steroids may temporarily affect your blood sugar, please contact your physician.**
- **Stop taking Coumadin or Plavix (related products) 7 days prior to the scheduled procedure.**

- **Bring any requested MRI, CT, X-ray images on the day of the procedure.**
- **If you are pregnant or possibility that you may be pregnant, let the physician know immediately, as the X-ray camera cannot be used.**
- **When you check in you will need to sign consent forms, advise the medical staff of any allergies, especially to shellfish, iodine, contrast dyes or Latex.**
- **IV sedation; No FOOD for 8 HOURS before the procedure. Clear fluids (Water, Apple Juice) are OK 4-6 hours before the procedure. If you are Diabetic and have taken your medicines, please make sure you drink Apple Juice 4-6 hours before your procedure.**

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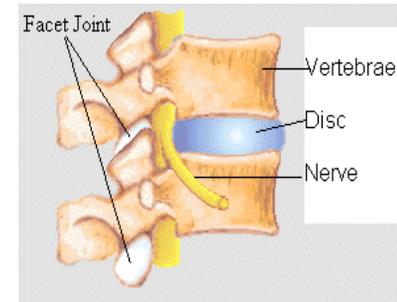
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## **FACET JOINT/ NERVE INJECTIONS**



### **WHAT IS A FACET JOINT INJECTION & WHEN IS IT INDICATED?**

Facet Joint Injections are injections of long lasting steroid ("cortisone") and/or local anesthetic in the joints or nerves that input the joints done under a fluoroscope (X-ray camera) with the latest and advanced techniques. These injections are performed in patients that suffer from unremitting back or neck pain that have not responded to other less invasive non-surgical options such as Physical therapy, Oral medications etc.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF IT?**

The facet joints are a source of pain when they become arthritic and/or inflamed, a steroid injection reduces the inflammation and/or swelling of tissue in the joint space. "It can be compared to trying to put the fire out from where it starts." This may in turn reduce pain, and other symptoms