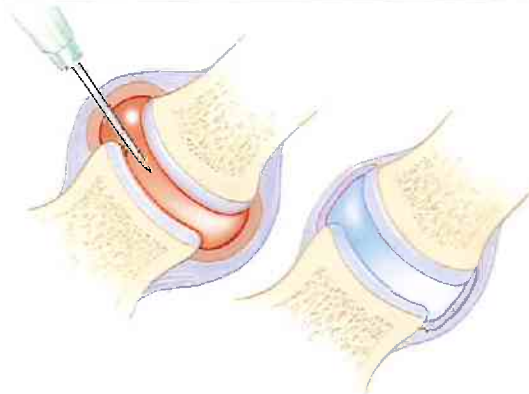
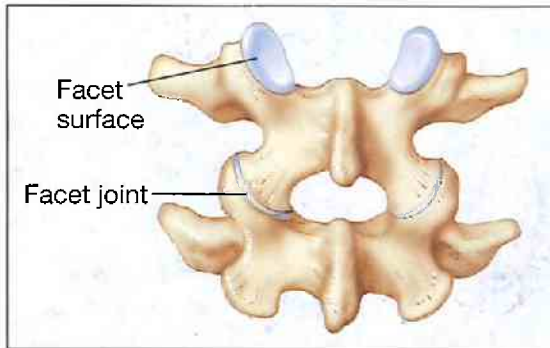


## What Is a Facet Joint?

Bones called **vertebrae** stack to form the spine. Each vertebra has **facets** (flat surfaces) where the vertebrae fit together. These surfaces touch and form a **facet joint** on each side of the vertebrae. Facet joints can become **inflamed** (swollen and irritated). This may cause pain in your back or neck.



Inflamed joint being injected

Reduced inflammation after injection

## What Is a Facet Joint Injection?

During this procedure, medication is injected into the inflamed facet joint. The medication helps numb the joint, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain. Pain relief from the injection should last for weeks to months. If the pain returns, a repeat injection or different type of injection may be needed.

## Back to Daily Life

Pain relief from facet joint injections can let you get back to enjoying everyday activities. In some cases, though, the injection may not relieve all pain. Repeat injections in the same place or injections into other joints may be needed. Or, another type of treatment may be recommended. Your doctor can discuss this with you.

### Special Instructions:

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### Also available in Spanish

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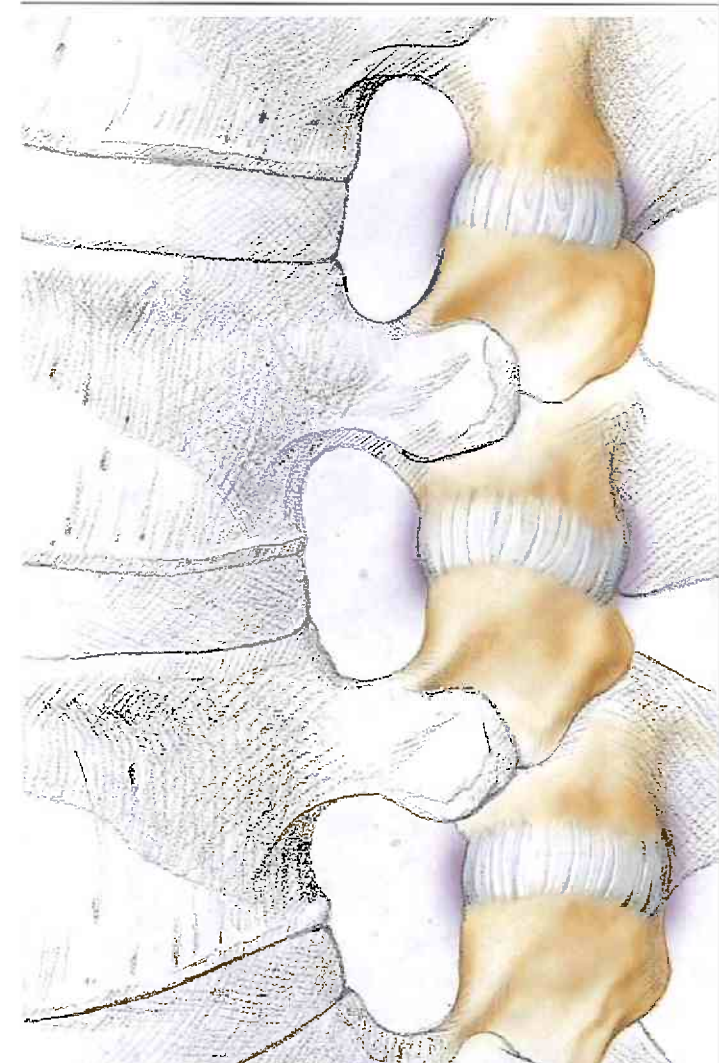


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# FACET JOINT INJECTION



Treatment for  
Pain Relief

## Easing Back or Neck Pain

Back or neck pain may be caused by a problem with the facet joints in your spine. If so, a **facet joint injection** may help. Medication is injected into certain facet joints. The injection can help pinpoint problem joints. It may also relieve pain.



▶▶ A facet joint injection may help relieve pain you feel in your back or neck.

### Getting Ready for Treatment

- At least a week before treatment, tell your doctor what medications, herbs, or supplements you take (including pain relievers and drugs to prevent blood clots). Ask whether you should stop taking any of them before treatment.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or if you are allergic to any medications.
- Stop eating or drinking as directed before your injection.
- Have a friend or family member ready to drive you home after the injection.

## Your Injection Experience

The injection is done in a hospital, surgery center, or office procedure suite. You'll be asked to fill out some forms, including a consent form.

### During the Procedure

You may be given an **IV** (intravenous) line in your arm or hand. To help you relax, you may be given medication through the IV line. You will be positioned on an exam table. For the treatment:

- The skin over the injection site is cleaned. It is then numbed with anesthetic.
- **Fluoroscopy** (x-ray imaging) may be used to help the doctor see your spine. If so, a contrast fluid may be injected into the affected area.
- The injection is given. It likely contains a medication to numb the area and another to reduce inflammation.
- You can often go home in about an hour. Have an adult relative or friend drive you.



▶▶ A fluoroscope may be used to help the doctor see your spine during the procedure.



▶▶ Take it easy for the rest of the day after your treatment, even if you feel good.

### After the Procedure

The anesthetic wears off in a few hours. When it does, your back or neck may feel more sore than usual. This is normal. Take it easy for the rest of the day. The steroids most often begin to work in about 2 to 4 days. Ask your doctor when it's okay to go back to work and driving.

### When to Call the Doctor

 *Call your doctor if you have:*

- Severe headaches
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Redness or drainage at the injection site
- Weakness in your arms or legs

### Risks and Complications

 *The procedure is considered safe, but risks include:*

- Prolonged increase in pain
- Infection
- Bleeding
- Allergic reaction
- Nerve damage (very rare)