FACET JOINT INFILTRATION

Definition:
An injection of local anaesthetic and cortisone compound is injected into the spinal joint to relieve infection and pain or to determine, if a suspect joint is the cause of the pain.

Course of action:
The patient receives superficial local anaesthetic, before a small spinal needle is inserted into the facet joint or capsule under image intensifier control. Local anaesthetic and cortisone compound are injected.

What can I expect after the injection?
It could be that directly after the injection you will not feel any pain. This is due to the local anaesthetic and is only for a few hours. This can be helpful to clarify the cause of the pain. The pain can return and you may have ongoing back pain for one or two days.

You should start to document the progress of the pain from the day of the infiltration (you will be given a form to fill in).

How long does the procedure take?
Fifteen minutes.

Does the procedure hurt?
The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic, which makes it tolerable.

What should I do after the procedure?
You can put an ice pack on the area treated. After the first day you can carry out activities, as long as they are bearable. You should avoid lifting and carrying heavy loads for a couple of days.

Can I go to work on the next day?
Yes. If there are no complications you can go to work on the next day. However, you could feel some back pain.

How many injections can I have?
We do not carry out more than three injections in a cycle of 6 months. If one administers more than three injections the side effects of the cortisone compound
could be increased. Besides, if three injections do not lead to a considerable improvement, then it is unlikely that further injections will help.

**What are the risks and side effects?**
This procedure is safe, as long as it is carried out in a sterile environment. However, as with every intervention there are risks, side effects and complications. The most common side effect is slight pain. Further risks are infection, bleeding and a worsening of the symptoms.

**Who should not receive these injections?**
As with other injections, you should not take these injections if you take blood dilutive medication (Marcumar, Plavix, Clopidogrel, Sintrom).

**NERVE ROOT / PERIRADICULAR INFILTRATION**

**Definition:**
A nerve root injection is known as nerve block anaesthesia, which alleviates pain. Our Clinic carries out this injection under an image intensifier control, in order to guarantee an exact and safe injection. Cortisone compounds are strong anti-inflammatory drugs, which are decongestant around the bulging nerve and the herniated vertebral disc. Due to the low risk and low incidence of basic complications, this is a sensible procedure which should be carried out, if the herniated disc or nerve pain cannot be treated by conservative methods. A large percentage of patients sense a complete disbandment of the symptoms.

**Course of action:**
First of all a superficial local anaesthetic is administered, before a spinal needle is inserted into the nerve root cavity of the lumbar canal or into the outgoing nerve root. After having examined the position of the needle, with a contrast agent if needed, a local anaesthetic or cortisone compound is injected.

**How often should the procedure be carried out?**
In general this procedure can be repeated three times within a couple of weeks or months, although further injections have to be controlled. The injection should be administered as a single dose, or one injection every 7 – 14 days. In an exceptional situation further injections can be administered.

**What are the expected results?**
Directly afterwards, but only for a short time you are free of pain as the local anaesthetic takes effect. The effect of the medication usually occurs after a few days
and up to two weeks. If local anaesthetic is used, the patient is not allowed to drive a couple of hours after the injection. On the next day the usual activities can be carried out. You should avoid lifting and carrying heavy loads for a couple of days.

**What are the risks and side effects?**

Risks and side effects are rare. Cortisone compounds can cause: increase in weight, build up of fluid, high blood sugar count (especially diabetics), high blood pressure, mood swings, indisposition, sleep disorder and repression of your own cortisone production. Fortunately, grave side effects are very rare. Further risks are connected to the unfavourable placing of the needle, which can trigger a “spinal headache”. Further rare risks are: aggravation of the pain, bleeding, infection, back ache, bowel or bladder infirmity, hematoma, paralysis, neurologic damage or allergic attacks. In order to prevent side effects and risks the procedure has to be carried out in a sterile environment and using an image intensifier.

**How long does the procedure take?**

30 minutes and then an observation period of approx. 60 minutes.

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**SACRAL BLOCK INJECTIONS (SIG = ISG)**

**Definition:**

An injection into the sacral block is carried out with a long effective cortisone compound and local anaesthetic. The sacral block is connected to the last vertebra of the lumbar vertebral column and the pelvis. They are in pairs (right and left) and surrounded by a joint capsule, such as a finger capsule.

**Course of action:**

The patient receives a superficial local anaesthetic then a small spinal needle is inserted into the SIG or the ligaments under image intensifier control. A local anaesthetic and cortisone compound are then injected.

**What are the expected results?**

Directly after the injection you might not have any pain or only slight pain. This is due to the local anaesthetic. This will only last for a couple of hours. The pain will return and you may have severe back pain for one or two days. This is due to the intervention with the needle and the cortisone compound itself. You should start to document the pain progress from the 3rd – 5th day.

**How long does the procedure take?**

Thirty minutes.
Does the procedure hurt?
The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic, which makes it tolerable.

What should I do after the procedure?
You can put an ice pack on the area treated. After one day you can carry out activities, as long as they are bearable. You should avoid lifting and carrying heavy loads for a couple of days.

Can I go to work the next day?
Yes. If there are no complications you can go to work the next day. You will feel back pain.

How many injections can I have?
During a six month cycle, we do not carry out more than three injections. If more than three injections are administrated, this could increase the effects of the cortisone compound. Besides, if three injections do not lead to a considerable improvement, then it is unlikely that further injections will help.

What are the risks and side effects?
This procedure is safe, as long as it is carried out in a sterile environment. However, as with every intervention there are risks, side effects and complications. The most common side effect is slight pain. Further risks are infection, bleeding and a worsening of the symptoms. As with other injections you should not take these injections if you take blood dilutive medication (Marcumar, Plavix, Clopidogrel, Sintrom). Side effects of cortisone compounds can be: edema, increase in weight, high blood sugar count (especially diabetics), high blood pressure, mood swings, irritability, sleep disorder and repression of your own cortisone production. Fortunately, grave side effects are very rare. You should speak with your doctor about all concerns.