

Facet Joint Injection (CT/Fluoroscopy)

What is a Facet Joint Injection?

This is an injection of local anaesthetic and steroid around one of the joints in your spine. It is carried out with the aid of an x-ray. The aim is to see if your back pain can be relieved.

You will need to bring someone with you to hospital to stay with you and drive you home afterwards. It would be best if that person could stay with you for a while when you get home.

Why do I need a Facet Joint Injection?

Other tests will have shown degenerative changes / wear and tear affecting the facet joints in your lower back. This injection is designed to help alleviate your symptoms of back pain.

Who has made the decision?

The consultant team and/or specialist physiotherapist in charge of your case will have referred you on to the radiologist carrying out your injection. If after discussion with the radiologist you decide you do not want the test you can decide against it.

What are the alternatives?

The alternatives would include – physiotherapy and pain relieving medication.

Who will be performing the facet joint injection?

The procedure is carried out by a radiologist (a doctor who specialises in x-ray procedures). The radiologist will explain the test to you before he starts, and answer any questions you may have.

The x-ray equipment is operated by a radiographer. Radiology nurses will also be present during the procedure. These members of staff will introduce themselves at the start of the examination.

Occasionally student radiographers or medical students will be present to observe the procedure.

Where will it take place?

In the fluoroscopy room or CT scanner in the Medical Imaging Department.

How do I prepare for a facet joint injection?

- **You will need to bring someone with you who can drive you home as we advise you not to drive for the rest of the day.**
- Facet joint injection can be performed as an outpatient / day case.
- If you have any allergies or you have previously reacted to intravenous contrast medium, you must let the doctor know. Intravenous contrast medium is the injection we give you during some scans.

- If you are diabetic, please contact the Medical Imaging Department on **01392 402336 selecting option 2, in-patient enquiries, option 8 for radiology nurses.**
- If you normally take any medication to thin your blood If you normally take any medication to thin your blood (anticoagulation or antiplatelet drugs) such as: **warfarin / clopidogrel / aspirin / non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS / brufen / ibrufen / nurofen / dabigatran (Pradaxa) / rivaroxiban (Xarelto) / Apixaban (Eliquis) / phendione / acenocoumarol** – then these may need to be stopped or altered. Please seek the advice of your hospital consultant or nurse specialist as soon as possible, ask your GP, or contact the Medical Imaging Department on **01392 402336 selecting option 2, in-patient enquiries and then option 8 for the radiology nurses.**
- After discussion with your GP or referring clinician, and you can safely stop these medications it is recommended that:
Warfarin is stopped 6 days prior to your procedure
Aspirin is stopped 7 days prior to your procedure
Clopidogrel is stopped 7 days prior to your procedure
NSAIDS are stopped 2 days prior to your procedure
Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) and Apixaban (Eliquis) are stopped 2 days before your procedure.
If you are taking Dabigatran (Pradaxa) please consult your doctor or contact the Medical Imaging Department on **01392 402336 selecting option 2, in-patient enquiries and then option 8 for the radiology nurses.**
- Other medication should be taken as normal.

Can I bring a friend or relative?

Yes, but for reasons of safety they will not be able to accompany you into the x-ray room.

Valuables

Patients are encouraged to leave their valuables at home. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure all valuables are on their person before leaving the Medical Imaging Department.

What actually happens during a Facet Joint Injection?

The x-ray equipment to be used will either be an x-ray fluoroscopic machine or a CT scanner.

The radiologist will explain the injection to you before he/she starts and will answer any questions you may have.

You may need to change into a hospital gown first of all. We will ask you lie face down on the x-ray table. The table is then moved under the x-ray machine which is connected to a TV monitor. The radiologist will apply some antiseptic to your back, which will feel rather cold. He/she will then inject the local anaesthetic into your back and numb the area. This will feel sharp and will sting for a few seconds.

At this point an x-ray is taken and the radiologist can see your spine on the TV monitor. A very fine needle is put close to the facet joint and local anaesthetic is injected to see if this will relieve your pain. This may cause some discomfort for a few moments.

Will it hurt?

The local anaesthetic injection will sting for a few moments and then the area will go numb.

How long does it take?

It takes about 20 minutes.

What happens afterwards?

We will help you get up slowly from the x-ray table as your back or leg may feel a bit stiff. Sometimes patients feel a little faint or dizzy when they sit up.

You may be asked to complete a follow-up form at home by recording your pain level for two days. When we receive this information back from you we will write a report and send it to your consultant.

What will happen to the results?

A report of the procedure will be recorded in your records immediately and also sent to your specialist within 48 hours.

We aim to report examinations, as soon as possible. Results will be sent to the Doctor who referred you for the investigation, as they may need further review and therefore it could be approximately 20 days before you are contacted by your Doctor.

Are there any risks or complications?

Any adverse reaction to this injection is rare.

There is a small possibility of an allergic reaction to the drugs used. If this occurs it is immediate, but is very rare. Every precaution is taken to avoid infection.

Contact us

If you have any queries or concerns you can contact us on **01392 402336**.

Cancelling your appointment

If you are unable to attend for your appointment, we would be grateful if you could contact us on **01392 402336 selecting option one**, as soon as possible. We can then offer your original appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you. Please be advised that if you fail to attend your appointment, it may be necessary to remove you from the radiology waiting list.

Please note: if you have had D&V (diarrhoea and vomiting) you will need to re-book your appointment unless you have been clear for the past 48 hours.

Finally...

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure, before you sign the consent form.

If you find reading this leaflet difficult or you don't understand what it means for you, please call **402336, selecting option 1, then option 4** and we can talk it through.

How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Park & Ride

Our Dartline PR3 Park & Ride bus is quick and not expensive.

It runs from Wonford Hospital to Digby. Digby is near Tesco, the railway station and junction 30 of the M5. There are signs along some of the main roads into Exeter pointing to the RD&E park and ride.

The park and ride service runs from Monday - Friday. **There is no service at the weekend.**

By bus

Stagecoach buses H Service run to Wonford Hospital from the high street in the city centre Monday to Saturday. Limited Sunday service. They also run to Wonford Hospital from the Broadfields area.

Stagecoach buses from Exmouth (57), Dawlish (2), Torbay (X46), Teignmouth (2) and Plymouth (X38) stop next to the hospital on Barrack Road.

First Southern National bus X53 from Weymouth, Seaton, Beer and Sidford stops next to the hospital on Barrack Road. Turner's Tours bus 369 from Chulmleigh, Lapford, Morchard Bishop and Crediton stops next to the hospital on Barrack Road and outside the main front entrance of the hospital.

By car

Follow signposts to the hospital from most of the main routes into Exeter. Follow signposts in the hospital grounds to our car parks.

Car parking is by pay & display, so please bring change.

The number of spaces is limited, so please leave plenty of time to find a space.

Using Sat Nav to find us?

Tap in postcode: EX2 5DW for RD&E Wonford

For more information on how to get to the hospital, please use the following website:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging

*This leaflet was modified with acknowledgment of,
and permission from, the Royal College of Radiologists.*

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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