

Facet Block or Medial Branch Block

<i>What is it?</i>	The facet joints (true joints of the spine) are located at the side of the spine. These joints are filled with synovial (lubricating) fluid. Each joint is associated with small nerves. A facet block, or medial branch block, is an injection made into a facet joint. A fluoroscope (specialized x-ray) is used to confirm that the facet joint is the source of the patient's pain. The procedure is done to decrease inflammation and pain in the affected area.
<i>Why is it done?</i>	Facet blocks are performed when a patient has evidence of changes resulting from arthritis in the back or neck, or from derangement (defect) in the facet joints. Other back and neck pain problems involve pain that originates in the facet joints, including whiplash, and spinal stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal). Your physician may prescribe one or more facet blocks, both to determine the location of your pain generator and attempt to diminish the inflammation in the affected area.
<i>How is it done?</i>	If the procedure is performed in the neck an intravenous (IV) catheter (tube) will be placed in your vein. When you are in the procedure room you will be asked to lie either face down (for upper or low back) or on your back (if the area is in the neck) on a cushioned x-ray table. A small needle is used to inject a local anesthetic (numbing medication) to numb the skin. Then small needles are placed in the side of the back or neck with the aid of a fluoroscope (x-ray machine). Usually, three or four needles are placed, since many nerves may be associated with a particular joint. The nerve associated with each joint is targeted, and a solution of local anesthetic and a cortisone derivative (anti-inflammatory medication) is injected. The needles are removed and small band aids are applied.
<i>Is there any preparation?</i>	You may receive conscious sedation. Conscious sedation is medication given through an IV (tube) in your arm. The medication will help you relax, but it will not put you to sleep. If you opt to have conscious sedation, you MUST NOT EAT OR DRINK for 4 hours before your procedure. You may, however, take your medication with a small sip of water .
<i>What to wear?</i>	Please wear loose, comfortable clothing. Please leave all jewelry and other valuables at home.
<i>How long does it take?</i>	We ask that you arrive 30-45 minutes before the scheduled time of your procedure. The procedure lasts about 15 to 30 minutes, and you will be in the recovery area about 15 minutes.
<i>What are the possible side effects of steroid medication?</i>	Administration of steroid medication can cause side effects. They include, but not limited to: hyperglycemia (increased blood sugar), sweats, and hot/cold flashes, flushing of the face, hypertension (increased blood pressure), osteoporosis, insomnia, mood swings and Cushing's Syndrome.
<i>Risks of this procedure include, but are not limited to:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pain in the area where the needle(s) were inserted. The pain can last for two to three days, and can be treated by using ice and mild analgesics (pain medication) such as Motrin, Naprosyn or Tylenol. * An allergic reaction to the local anesthetic or dye. Most allergic reactions do not require further treatment. * If you ever had an allergic reaction to contrast or anesthesia, you must tell your doctor before the procedure is done. * Tell your doctor before the procedure if taking blood thinners, have a blood disease that affects clotting, have a bowel obstruction and or have an uncontrolled infection. * Bleeding in the area of the injection due to damage to blood vessels. * Temporary numbness or weakness in your arms or legs. This is normal. You should have assistance with walking and should not drive for 24 hours. If the temporary numbness or weakness persists, please contact your doctor. * Infection in the area of the injection. * Increased pain. * Nerve damage, diarrhea, paralysis, stroke and even death.

Instructions Regarding Your Procedure
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Will I receive a pre-procedure phone call?	A nurse from our office will call you 24-48 hours prior to your procedure. She will ask you a few important medical questions, AND she will confirm your appointment. We must have <u>a verbal confirmation from you 24-48 hours prior to your procedure.</u> Failure to return our call could result in your procedure being rescheduled. The number to call us back is: (315) 703-3480
Where can I obtain more procedure information?	Please visit our website www.nyspineandwellness.com . It contains demonstrations of some of the procedures we offer. We also have other helpful information.
Can I drive home from the procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/> You MUST have a ride home, and your driver should remain on site. You must not drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours.
Can I eat Breakfast? <i>*the box with a check applies to you</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, you can eat a light breakfast or light lunch <input type="checkbox"/> No, DO NOT EAT OR DRINK for 4 hours before your procedure. However, you may take your medicine but only with a small sip of water.
Should I stop taking aspirin?	If you take ASPIRIN or products containing ASPIRIN in doses greater than 325 mg/per day, you must stop taking it 7 days prior to your procedure (examples of ASPIRIN-containing products include but are not limited to: EXCEDRIN, FIORINAL, AND ALKA SELTZER, etc).
Can I take the aspirin prescribed for <u>cardiac</u> and or <u>stroke</u> prevention?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, you can continue to take your aspirin for cardiac or stroke prevention, not to exceed 325mg per day.
Can I take my blood thinner? <i>*the box with a check applies to you</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Our provider has advised you on the number of days to hold the blood thinner you take. <input type="checkbox"/> Our provider will have to contact the Doctor who has prescribed the blood thinner for you to learn how long it is safe for you to be off the medicine prior to your procedure. One of our nurses will call you when we have obtained that information.
Can I take my other medications? <i>*the box with a check applies to you</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, except for blood thinners. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, only with a small sip of water,(you must not take your blood thinner)
What time is my procedure?	You will receive a phone call one or two business days prior to your procedure to remind you of the time you should arrive for your procedure (usually 30-40 minutes prior to the scheduled time) and the location. PLEASE BE ON TIME. <i>*some patients may receive a call to confirm insurance information.</i>
How long will it take?	We ask that you plan 1½ -3 hours from the time you arrive at the center to the time you are discharged. Please understand that circumstances sometimes arise that are out of our control, which cause a longer delay. Please plan accordingly.
What do I bring?	You must bring the following <u>each time</u> you have a procedure: 1. Your current insurance information 2. A written list of all your current medications including the strength and frequency you take them. Please include over the counter medication, vitamins and herbal supplements.
What shall I wear?	Please wear comfortable loose fitting clothing.
Can I wear jewelry?	No. Please leave all jewelry and other valuables at home. We are unable to store them safely. Any body- piercing jewelry must be completely removed, as this may interfere with the x-ray machine.
What do I do if I am ill or have to cancel?	Please call the office 24 hours in advance if you are unable to keep your appointment. (315) 552-6700. We do charge patients for no shows.