

## How long does the effect of the medication last?

If the facet joints are the source of the pain, you should benefit from the injection immediately. Depending upon the medication injected, effects can last from one to six hours or more.

## What to expect after the procedure?

You will be provided with discharge instructions that the nurse will review with you.

Please keep track of your pain and report it to The Pain Clinic at 802 748-7345 within two days after the procedure.

## What is the next step after having good relief?

If you obtain significant benefit from the procedure, the next step would be consideration of radiofrequency treatment of the medial branch nerves.

If you have questions about your procedure please call the Pain Clinic:

**802 748-7345**

If you speak another language, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Ask for assistance.

Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Demandez de l'aide.

Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Pedir ayuda.



NORTHEASTERN VERMONT  
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## The Pain Clinic

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## THE PAIN CLINIC

## INFORMATION FOR OUR PATIENTS

# Medial Branch Blocks

## What is a medial branch block?

Medial branch nerves are very small nerve branches that carry pain signals from the facet joints in the muscles around the joint to the brain. With the nerves being blocked or numbed by a medial branch block, they will not be able to transfer the pain signal from the joints to the brain.

## What are facet joints?

The facet joints are small joints in the back of the spine that form connections between each vertebra. Each vertebra has a surface on four facet joints, two on the upper surface and two on the lower surface of the vertebrae. The facet joints limit how far you can twist or bend your neck and back.

## What is the purpose of this procedure?

This is a diagnostic procedure. This injection is done to confirm the diagnosis of facet joint disease and to find out if the facet joints are contributing to your pain.

## Before the procedure:

If you are taking blood thinners, antibiotics, steroids, have an active infection, or have a bleeding disorder, you should not have the procedure without further discussion and a plan.

Please let us know of any allergies you have, especially to local anesthetics, contrast dye, and latex.

Don't take any of your as needed pain medications the day of your procedure.

**You will not be able to drive after the procedure.** Please make sure that you have a driver to take you home. Your procedure will be rescheduled if you do not have a driver.

## How much time does the injection take?

Injection can take from 15 to 45 minutes.

## What medicine is injected?

A numbing medicine (local anesthetic) is injected. No steroids are used with this procedure.

## How is this procedure performed?

The patient lies on his/her stomach. The skin of the back is cleaned with antiseptic solution and a local anesthetic is injected under x-ray guidance. You cannot receive sedation or pain medicine for this procedure as you need to be awake and tell us how your pain reacts to the injection.

## What are the risks and potential side effects?

- Pain in area of injection
- Infection
- Bleeding
- Nerve injury
- Allergic reaction to the medication or dye