



Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Patient Information

Facet Joint Injection

Welcome to the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (ROH).
For further information please visit www.roh.nhs.uk

What is a facet joint injection?

Facet joints are small joints in the spine that help support weight and control movement of the spine.

A facet joint injection is an injection into these small joints.

Why do I need to have the injection?

The injection may be used to help diagnose your condition or for the treatment of back pain which may be originating from these joints.

Who does this procedure?

The procedure is done by a doctor in the Injection Room on the Admissions and Day Case Unit (ADCU).

What is injected?

An anti-inflammatory drug called a corticosteroid is injected, usually with a local anaesthetic.

A small quantity of dye (which can be seen on the X-ray images) is also used to confirm that the injection is into the joint.

The anti-inflammatory drug can take up to 6 weeks before any benefit is felt.

The local anaesthetic is responsible for immediate improvement in your pain but when it wears off the pain may return.

Important information

Before your injection you must inform the

ADCU staff if you are:

- diabetic,
- feel unwell,
- have an infection, cold or persistent cough,
- have any allergies
- taking any of the following medication **Antibiotics, Aspirin, Warfarin or Clopidogrel** or any other tablet taken to thin the blood (some of these may need to be stopped some days before).

For female patients

- You must inform the clinician who is referring you, if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.
- If you find you are pregnant before the procedure, please inform the ADCU staff.

Failure to do so may result in your procedure being cancelled on the day.

What are the risks of this procedure?

The risks associated with this procedure are rare but include:

- Infection
- Bleeding around the area causing bruising
- Allergic reaction to the medicine
- Worsening pain
- Nerve damage.
- If you are diabetic then the injection may raise your glucose levels.

- Glucose levels should be monitored for up to 1 month after injection. If there are any changes in diabetic symptoms then patient should consult their GP.
- Facial flushing for a few days.
- Temporary discomfort for a few days after your injection.
- For females - temporary alteration of your menstrual cycle.
- Take any medication as normal unless advised otherwise. Bring a list of your tablets with you.
- You will be admitted to ADCU and assessed by a nurse. This is to make sure you are fit and ready for your facet joint injection. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions at this stage.
- The doctor carrying out your procedure will also see you before have you the facet joint injection.
- You will be at the ADCU for 2 - 4 hours. This time may vary depending on individual circumstances.

Please note

The risk of complications with this procedure are small.

Please discuss any concerns with the clinician looking after you.

On the day of your procedure

- Please arrive at ADCU no more than 10 minutes before your appointment time as the waiting area is limited.
- If you are brought in by a relative or friend, they can accompany you to the admission reception, where you will be booked in and handed in to the care of the ADCU team. Please ensure your relative or friend is aware that there is waiting space for **patients only** in ADCU.
- Relatives/friends wishing to stay on site are kindly asked to leave the Admissions Unit and are welcome to use the restaurant facilities in the main hospital building (see p7-8 for details). Long stay parking is available at Gate C.
- We ask for only **one nominated relative/friend** to contact us for updates (e.g. progress, expected discharge time). Relatives are free to contact **ADCU** for updates on **0121 685 4080**.
- We have in excess of 40 patients attending this unit per day and would welcome your co-operation. Thank you.
- You can eat and drink normally before arriving although you won't be offered anything once admitted. This is to aid your comfort during the procedure and is an additional safety measure in case of complications.

What does the procedure involve?

You will be lying on your front for the procedure, which usually takes 10-20 minutes. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin and fine needles are passed toward the joints under X-ray guidance. Once the needle is confirmed to be in the joint, the injection takes place.

You may have several joints injected at the same time.

What will happen after the facet joint injection?

After your procedure, you will be monitored by nursing staff until you are ready to go home. This will usually be about 30 minutes after your procedure.

Please note:

You must not drive yourself home or use public transport.

For your own well being we advise that you are collected by a relative or friend. Hospital transport can only be booked if there is a medical need and you meet the set criteria.

Back at home

It is important that you take things easy for the rest of the day. Do not do any excessive exercise or heavy work for the first few days.

If a dressing is in place remove the dressing the morning following your procedure. Continue to take your pain relief tablets until you notice an improvement in your symptoms.

Follow up appointment.

Need for a follow up appointment will be discussed before you are discharged.

Can't make your appointment?

If for any reason you cannot make your appointment you must let ADCU scheduled care coordinator know as soon as possible. You can contact the department on - 0121 685 4334

Mon-Fri 8.30am to 4.00pm

This will enable the vacant appointment to be filled by someone else. Your appointment will not be automatically re-booked unless you call to tell us you are not coming.

Who do I contact if I have any problems following the procedure?

From 9am – 5pm you can either speak to a nurse on the ADCU on 0121 685 4080 or contact the secretary for the clinician you are under.

Outside these hours contact the 'bleep holder' through switchboard at the ROH (0121 685 4000).

Patient Support

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers help, support and advice to patients, their relative, friends and carers. PALS can help answer questions you have about hospital services; respond to problems or concerns; and welcome your suggestions or comments, both positive and negative. PALS can be contacted by phone, Monday to Friday, 8.30am and 4.30pm. See contact details below.

Patient Experience

As a hospital we are committed to listening to the views of our patients and using the feedback to inform service improvement plans. You may be asked to complete a number of surveys at different stages during your treatment. Please help us by completing the questionnaires. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Contact Numbers

PALS	0121 685 4128
ADCU Scheduled Care Coordinator	0121 685 4334
ADCU	0121 685 4080