



HEALTH CONSUMERS'
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A14lite Facet Joint Injection

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at any Western Australian public hospital for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:

This document will give you information about a facet joint injection. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a facet joint injection?

A facet joint injection involves injecting local anaesthetics and sometimes steroids into or around a facet joint (see figure 1). The local anaesthetics numb the nerves to the facet joint to give pain relief. The steroids reduce inflammation and may make the pain relief last longer.

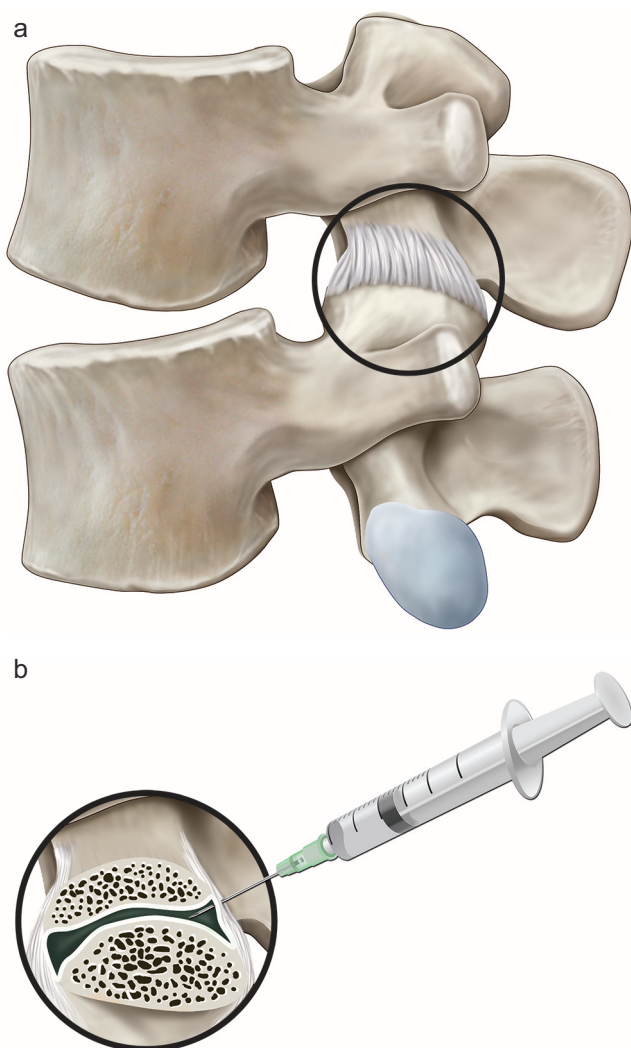


Figure 1

- a A side view of lumbar vertebrae
- b A facet joint injection

What are the benefits of a facet joint injection?

As you get older, it is normal to get some gradual wear and tear in your joints (osteoarthritis). If this happens in your facet joints, it can cause pain. A facet joint injection can be used to find out if your pain is caused by your facet joints.

Are there any alternatives to the injection?

An x-ray or scan can show if you have osteoarthritis in one or more of your facet joints. If you decide not to have an injection, your doctor may be able to suggest other methods of pain relief. You may need more painkillers that are more likely to make you feel sick or drowsy.

What does the procedure involve?

A facet joint injection usually takes less than 30 minutes.

Your doctor will use antiseptic to clean the area and will inject local anaesthetic into the area, allowing your doctor to give the facet joint injection with much less discomfort for you. Your doctor will carefully insert the needle for the injection. They may inject dye (colourless contrast fluid) and take an x-ray to help them to check that the needle is in the right position. Sometimes your doctor will use an ultrasound scanner to help guide them while they insert the needle.

What complications can happen?

- Failure of the injection
- Worsening pain
- Backache
- Allergic reaction
- Seizures
- Infection
- Short-term nerve injury
- Long-term nerve injury
- Blood clot

How soon will I recover?

After a short while you should be able to go home.

Rest if you feel tired.

You should be able to return to normal activities the next day.

Summary

A facet joint injection can be used to find out if your pain is caused by your facet joints, or to treat pain in your facet joints.

Acknowledgements

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