

# SPINE PROCEDURE INFORMATION

CENTER FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT – 3200 WESTHILL

## CERVICAL FACET BLOCK AND STEROID INJECTION

**Description of procedure:** Your doctor has requested this procedure because you have neck, shoulder and/or arm pain. There are two major reasons to perform this procedure: 1) to determine whether particular facet joints are causing your symptoms, and 2) to provide temporary pain relief. Although these goals are usually achieved, it is impossible to guarantee that 1) the cause of your pain will be identified, and 2) your pain will be decreased. The period of relief is variable and unpredictable in each patient.

The procedure takes about 30 minutes. You will lie on your stomach and must be able to turn your head. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic soap, and then numbed with a local anesthetic. Using fluoroscopy, the radiologist will pass a needle into the appropriate facet joint. A separate needle is used for each joint. After confirming correct needle position using an x-ray dye, the anesthetic medication will be injected in and around the joint. During injection, you may feel pressure or mild discomfort. These sensations last several seconds.

Two different medications are injected at the same time. A short-acting anesthetic agent is injected for diagnostic information. If your pain is relieved immediately following the procedure, it will come back after the anesthetic agent wears off (about 1-2 hours). An anti-inflammatory steroid is injected for longer pain relief, and begins working after 1-2 days. Until the steroid reaches maximum effectiveness (5-7 days), do not perform heavy activity. The duration of relief depends on many factors, including the severity and reversibility of your condition. You will receive a discharge sheet as well as a pain diary to chart the changes in your symptoms.

After the facet block, the short-acting anesthetic can make your arms feel numb or weak. You should minimize activity for 2-3 hours, then resume routine daily activities as tolerated. You should not drive a car until your arms feel normal. You can leave the hospital immediately if you have someone who can help you. If you have questions or concerns, please call your doctor or one of the radiologists.

**Risks associated with this procedure:** Complications are infrequent but possible. Pain may be worsened after the procedure. The needle may cause local bleeding or rarely infection. Other risks include allergic or adverse reaction to the x-ray dye or medications. Permanent numbness and weakness are theoretically possible.

Before your procedure, a radiologist will answer any questions.

### IMPORTANT:

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|--|-----|----|
| • Are you allergic to x-ray dye (contains iodine)? | Yes | No |
| • Do you have diabetes?                            | Yes | No |
| • Do you take coumadin or another blood thinner?   | Yes | No |
| • Are you being treated for an infection?          | Yes | No |
| • Is it possible that you are pregnant?            | Yes | No |

Patient \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_