

# Medial branch block of cervical facet joint

## Patient information leaflet

**If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format  
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.**

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،  
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,  
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,  
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe  
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.  
إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق

Southport Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport,  
Merseyside, PR8 6PN  
Telephone: 01704 541471

Ormskirk Hospital  
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,  
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ  
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[www.MerseyWestLancs.nhs.uk](http://www.MerseyWestLancs.nhs.uk)

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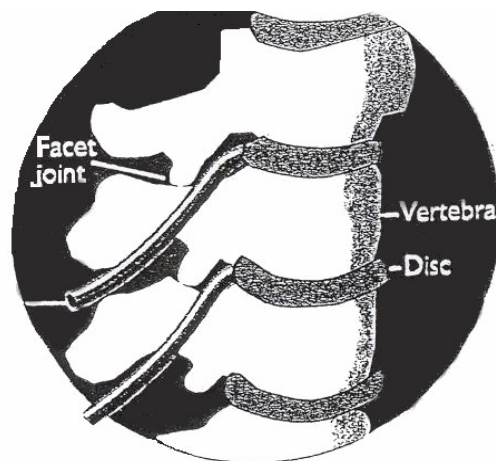
The aim of this procedure is to lessen the experience of pain. Time in the pain management clinic is available for you to discuss possible options available with the doctor providing this treatment. Before treatment you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Potential risks are listed on the consent form for your information so that you may read and understand the treatment you are about to receive.

### What is a facet joint medial branch block?

The facet joints are the small linking joints of the spine. At each level of the spine, nerve supply to the facet joints is provided by small nerves emerging from the spinal cord. These are called the medial branch nerves. They supply sensation from the facet joint.

Many people experience pain in these joints, which may be linked to arthritic changes or general 'wear and tear' which we all experience as we get older. The picture below explains where the facet joints are in the spine.



### Special instructions

Please do not drive for the next 24 hours after receiving this injection.

### Any condition specific danger signals to look out for

See risk/side effects section.

### Contact information if you are worried about your condition

Your own GP.

### Other useful telephone numbers/contacts

NHS 111.

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton)  
0300 100 1000.

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire)  
0800 328 6297.

## Contact details

Chronic pain management  
Monday to Wednesday  
01704 704 201.

Wednesday to Friday  
01695 656 421.

Appointments office  
01695 656 680.

Daycase appointments  
01695 656 007.

Specialist nurse and pain nurses  
Telephone  
01704 705 132.

This procedure is carried out in an appropriate treatment area either under ultrasound or x-ray screening to aid accuracy.

A solution of slow release steroid preparation is injected around the nerve supplying sensation to the facet joint. The skin is made numb with local anaesthetic before the medial branch block is performed. The steroid preparation has an anti-inflammatory action and will remain in your system for up to 12 weeks.

Sometimes patients can experience pain relief for longer than this. In some cases however, patients can experience no pain relief at all. The Injections may take up to 2 weeks to start working.

To receive the injection you will be required to lie face down on the table throughout the procedure.

There may be some discomfort at the time of the injection but this will not last long.

It is safe to take your normal medication and eat breakfast before attending the hospital.

Following the procedure you will be offered a hot drink. After this, if you feel well enough you can travel home.

Please read your appointment card carefully as this will tell you the clinic area and the hospital site you must attend for this procedure.

## Risks/side effects

All steroid injections can cause a short term reduction in the function of the immune system along with possible facial flushing, short term menstrual irregularity in females and altered blood sugar levels in diabetic patients. Further information on the risks can be found in the consent form.

### Infection

There is a small chance of wound infection or the potential for deeper spinal infection. We do take every measure to avoid this and procedures are conducted in a theatre environment to reduce risk.

### Bleeding

Rarely you may get some bleeding and or bruising around the injection site, this will usually settle after a few days.

### Nerve injury

There is the rare potential for a nerve injury. This can happen if the needle comes into contact with a nerve or nerve sheath. This may cause some numbness and weakness affecting the limbs. This is generally temporary whilst the local anesthetic wears off.

## Injection site tenderness

You may experience some injection site tenderness and increased pain for a few days or hours after the injection. This generally settles on its own.

## Alternative treatment options

If you decide not to have the procedure your alternative option is to continue to manage your pain conservatively. This can be assisted with physiotherapy and referral to a pain management programme if suitable.

In some cases if appropriate and clinically indicated, you may choose to proceed with surgery instead.

The aims, benefits and alternatives to a medial branch injection have been outlined within the leaflet. If you decide you do not wish to go ahead with your planned procedure, please contact the waiting list office on 01695 656 670 to inform them of your decision as soon as possible.

On the day of your injection, you and your doctor will sign the consent form together to document your consent to proceed with the procedure.

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussion during your clinical consultation. If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment or contact the people on page 5. You will be given a follow-up appointment before you leave the clinic