

# FACET INJECTION

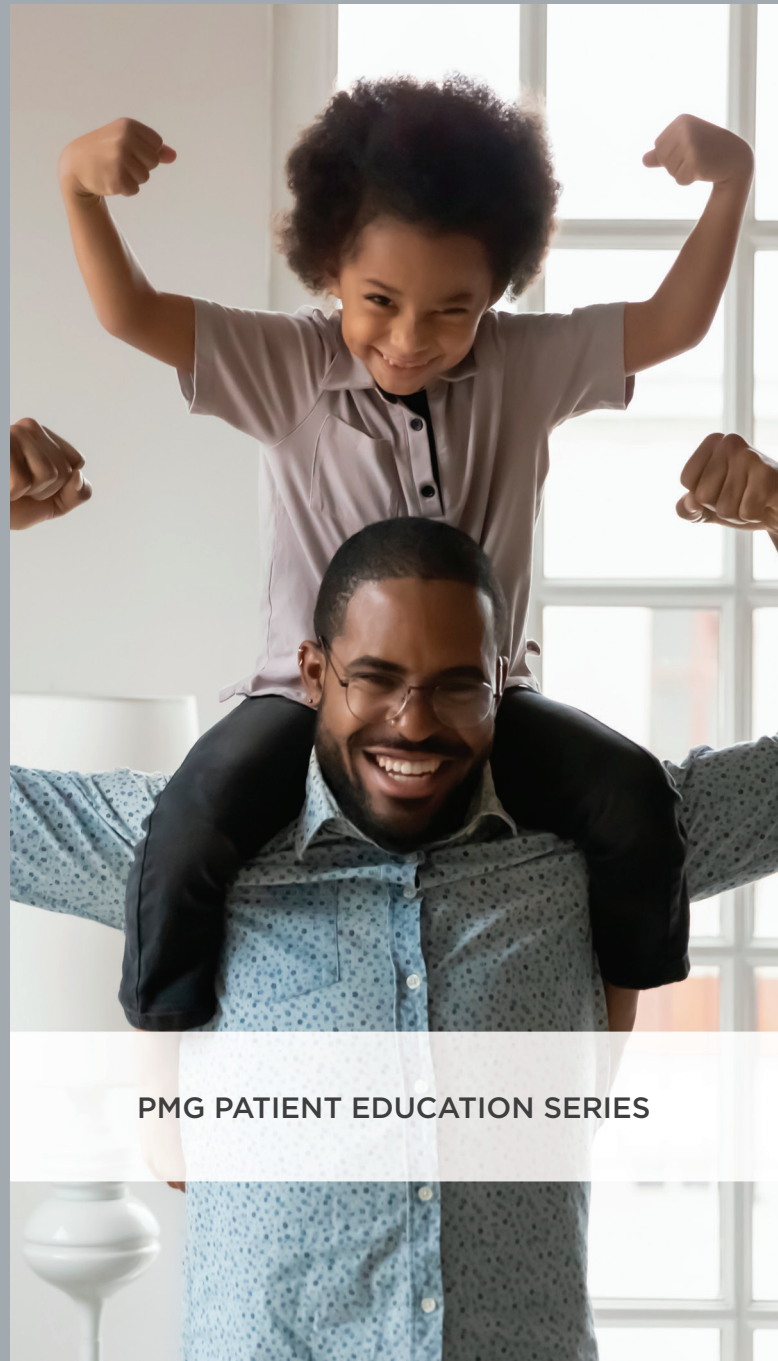
for Chronic Upper, Middle & Lower Back Pain, Neck Pain & Headaches

## FACET INJECTION

is an outpatient procedure for treatment of chronic upper, middle and lower back pain, neck pain and headaches. This information has been provided by your provider so you can better understand this procedure. Your provider will make the best recommendation for your specific needs.

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This pamphlet is for general education only. Specific questions or concerns should always be directed to your provider. Your provider can explain possible risks or side effects.



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# FACET INJECTION

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## What are facet joints?

Facet joints, located on both sides of the spine, are small but guide the spine in movement. These are named for the vertebrae they connect and the side of the spine where they are found.

## What is facet joint pain?

Facet joint pain is a result of injury, either to the cartilage inside the joint or the connecting ligaments surrounding the joint.

Pain from an injured facet joint may range from muscle tension to more severe pain. Depending on which facet joint is affected, the pain may occur in an area from your lower back down to your buttocks. Areas of pain usually associated with specific joints include: your buttocks if lumbar; upper back to lower back if thoracic; and lower neck to back of head if cervical.

Common tests such as x-rays or MRIs may not always show if a facet joint is the reason for your pain.

## What is a facet injection?

During this procedure, a local anesthetic (numbing medicine) and corticosteroid (anti-inflammatory medicine) are injected into one or more facet joints.

The doctor will insert a thin needle into the facet joint. Fluoroscopy, a type of x-ray, will be used to ensure the safe and proper position of the needle. Once your physician is sure the needle is correctly placed, the medicine will be injected.

The injection can be used to diagnose or treat. If the injection temporarily lessens your pain and helps you move better, your doctor will know which facet joint is causing the pain. The corticosteroid is used to treat inflammation of the facet joint.

## What happens after an injection?

You will be monitored for up to 30 minutes after the injection. Before you leave, you will be given discharge instructions. Keeping track of your pain helps the doctor know what the next steps will be.

You may want to check for pain by moving in ways that hurt before the injection, but do not overdo it. You may feel immediate pain relief and numbness in your back for up to six hours after the injection. This means the medication has reached the right spot.

Your pain may return after this short pain-free period or may even be a little worse for a day or two. This is normal. It may be caused by needle irritation or by the medication itself. Corticosteroids usually take two or three days to start working but can take as long as a week.

You should be able to return to work the day after the injection, but always check with your doctor.

## How long can I expect pain relief?

Depending on the number of injured areas and the amount of inflammation, an injection could offer several months of pain relief before further treatment is needed. If there is no underlying bone or joint problem, one injection could bring long-term pain relief. If your pain is caused by injury to more than one area, only some of your symptoms may be helped by one injection.

Regular stretching, strength and cardiovascular training may reduce stress to the facet joints and slow the degeneration process. This is done by improving overall strength and condition and lowering inflammation in the body.

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