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Piedmont Comprehensive
Pain Management Group LLC

managing your pain
improving your quality of life



Cervical Facet Injection

What is a Cervical Facet Injection?

A cervical facet injection is an injection of local anesthetic (*numbing medicine*) and steroid medication into one or more of your cervical facet joints. Facet joints are the joints that connect the vertebrae or the spine. The cervical region, or neck area, of the spine consists of seven vertebrae. Inflammation of the cervical facet joints is a common source of pain. Steroids are powerful anti-inflammatory agents that work best when injected directly into the area where the inflammation is occurring. Common causes of facet joint inflammation include arthritic changes in the facet joint and degenerative spine conditions such as scoliosis. A cervical facet injection may be used to diagnose or treat neck, shoulder, upper back, or headache pain. Depending on the source of pain, your doctor may inject one or multiple facet joints.

What to expect when receiving a Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection?

A cervical facet injection is a minimally invasive procedure that can be performed safely in the Piedmont Comprehensive Pain Management Group office. The procedure lasts for about 30 minutes. You will be asked to sign a consent form, and you will be helped onto the exam room table where you will remain lying on your stomach for the remainder of the procedure. After being cleansed with an antiseptic solution, the skin on the back of your neck will be anesthetized (*numbed*) with a local anesthetic. At this time you may feel a temporary stinging or burning sensation. Once numbed, a small needle is advanced into the facet joint. Fluoroscopy, a type of x-ray, will be used by your physician to ensure safe and proper placement of the needle. Next, the steroid mixture will be injected into the facet joint. It is not uncommon to experience a feeling of pressure at this point in the procedure. Finally, the needle will be carefully removed, and the procedure will be complete. Following the procedure, the injection site will be cleansed, and a band aid will be applied.

How will I feel after the Injection?

Immediately following the injection you may experience temporary pain relief that may last for several hours. This is due to the numbing medication, and once the numbing medicine wears off, your pain may return. It may take two to three days for the anti-inflammatory steroid medication to have an effect. For this reason, it may be several days before you notice a change in our pain. In rare cases, your pain may temporarily increase following the injection. This is due to an increase in pressure within the epidural space. It is not uncommon to need more than one injection to get long term benefit. Cervical epidural steroid injections are done routinely in a series of three injections about two weeks apart if needed.

Common Risks Associated with Cervical Facet Injection

Cervical facet injections are considered a very safe, minimally invasive procedure. However, like any injection procedure, there are some associated risks/side effects. Common complications include bleeding and bruising at the injection site, post-procedure headaches, dizziness or lightheadedness immediately following the procedure, and numbness or weakness. If you experience any concerning symptoms following your injection, you should call your doctor immediately or go to an emergency room.

Pre and Post Procedure Instructions

- Bring a driver to your injection appointment. You will be rescheduled if you do not have a driver. This is for your own safety
- Discuss any anti-coagulants (*blood thinners*) that you are currently taking with your physician. It may or may not be necessary to discontinue some of these medications for a short time prior to this injection.
- Do not work the day of your injection. You should be able to return to work the following day.

If you have any questions regarding your procedure, do not hesitate to contact us.