

Facet Joint Radiofrequency Denervation

Pain Clinic Patient Information Leaflet



- **Injection treatments are not always effective and may not help your pain.**
- Mild local tenderness/bruising.
- A prickling sunburn-like sensation that usually gets better over time.
- Rarely, the Local anaesthetic may spread to surrounding areas causing some **numbness and/or weakness**. This is only temporary.
- Steroid can have varied effects: flushing, menstrual disturbances, weight gain, increase in blood sugar levels and mood changes. These effects are temporary and more likely with repeated injections.
- **Infection:** This is rare. You should seek medical help if there is local warmth or redness over the site of injection with tenderness, and/or you feel hot and unwell. This may require antibiotic treatment.
- There are very important nerves in the spine, but **serious nerve injury is extremely rare** (less than 1 in 10,000 cases).

What follow-up will be arranged?

- You will be contacted by the Pain Clinic Nursing Team 4-6 weeks after your procedure.
- If you have any questions/concerns you can contact the Pain Clinic.
- To leave patient experience feedback please go online to www.ruh.nhs.uk/FFT

More in-depth patient information is available:

www.fpm.ac.uk/about-pain-medicine-patients-relatives/patient-information-leaflets

References: Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. www.fpm.ac.uk

If you have any queries please contact:

The Pain Clinic

Zone F, Department F18
RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies
Centre - Royal United Hospitals Bath

Intervention Follow-Up Advice Line: 01225 826896

(This is an Answer-phone Service, please leave a message. Phone messages are checked 14:00-15:00 Monday to Friday, we will aim to call back in 24-48 hours)

If you need advice during out-of-hours, please contact your GP or NHS111. For Emergency please dial 999.

The RUH, where you matter

Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.

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Checklist

- You **must not eat 6 hours before the procedure**. You can drink clear fluids (black tea, water) up until 2 hours before the procedure. **You must only sip water 2 hours before the procedure.**
- Bring a list of all current medications.
- Make arrangements for someone to collect you after the procedure.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing.
- Glasses (if you need them to read).

Changes to your health

Please let the Pain Clinic know if:

- You take anticoagulant/blood thinning or antiplatelet medication
- You have an infection
- You have diabetes
- You have any allergies
- You are pregnant
- You are planning to travel abroad within 2 weeks of the injections.

Consent

If you have any questions before your appointment you can contact the Pain Clinic. **Your doctor will obtain your signed consent before the injection.**

The RUH, where you matter

What is Facet Joint Radiofrequency Denervation?

Facet joints are small joints that link the bones of the spine together allowing our back to flex and move. It is normal for these to develop age related changes over time. Radiofrequency Denervation is a procedure that involves heating specific nerves that supply the facet joints using a needle connected to the radiofrequency machine.

Radiofrequency Denervation is usually offered when a Diagnostic Medial Branch Block procedure has proven to produce an excellent but temporary response, confirming that the facet joints as a source of your pain. The aim of the treatment is to provide you longer lasting pain relief.

The procedure

- Your observations will be taken.
- You will be helped into the correct position and the team will ensure you are comfortable throughout.
- The injection site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution (this can feel cold).
- A Radiographer will be present to operate the X-ray machine.
- An injection of local anaesthetic will be used to numb the area (this will sting) to reduce any procedural discomfort and usually some steroid to reduce any discomfort in the days following the procedure.
- The doctor will direct the radiofrequency needles to the area(s) suspected to be a

source of pain using the x-ray machine to guide this.

- The doctor may ask you if you feel any tingling feeling or twitching of the muscles around where the needles are placed as they complete the procedure.

Aftercare

- After the procedure you will be taken to recovery and monitored.
- You will usually be able to return home approximately one hour after the injection.
- Ideally, you should arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours.
- You should not drive, operate machinery, sign legal documents, provide childcare unsupervised or drink alcohol for at least 24 hours and until fit to do so.
- You may experience some soreness or aching at the injection site.
- **Please keep the area of the injection dry for 24 hours following the procedure.**
- Do not worry if your pain feels worse for a few days, this sometimes happens; take your regular medications and this should settle.
- Try not to overdo things on a good day as this can lead to increased pain levels and reduced activities for the next day or so.
- As your pain decreases, use this time to aid your rehabilitation and try to gently increase your exercise and activity levels.

Possible side effects and risks

As with any procedure, side effects may occur. These are usually minor but there are risks with this procedure.