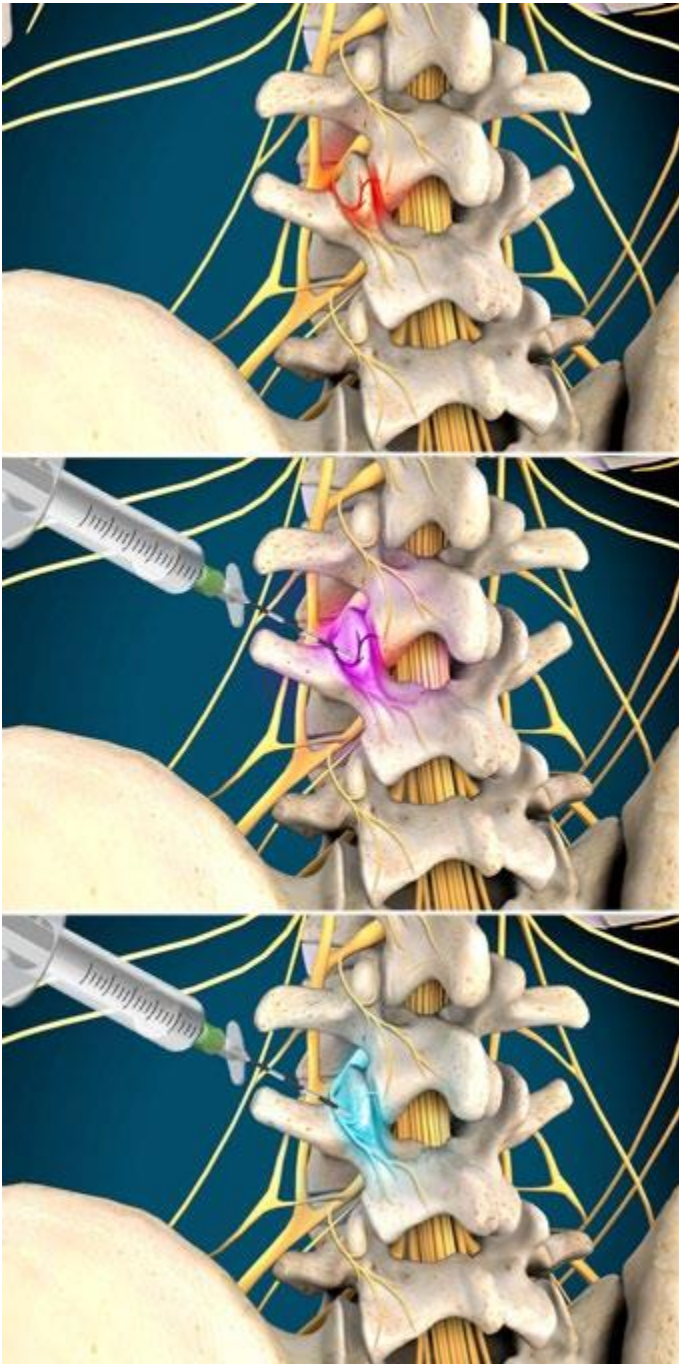




MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK



Overview

This diagnostic procedure is performed to identify a painful facet joint. The facet joints are the joints between the vertebrae in the spine. This allows the spine to bend, flex and twist.

Preparation

In preparation for the procedure, the patient is positioned on his/her stomach. The physician injects a local anesthetic. This numbs the skin and tissue around the facet joint that is suspected of causing the patient's pain.

Contrast Dye Injected

Once the tissue is numb, the physician inserts a needle into the skin. The needle is carefully guided down the facet joint. The physician injects a contrast solution through this needle. The contrast solution helps the physician see the area on a camera called a fluoroscope. The fluoroscope provides live x-ray images. The physician uses the fluoroscope to confirm the location of the needles tip.

Anesthetic Injected

Once the physician has confirmed that the needle is positioned correctly, the physician attaches a syringe containing an anesthetic medication. This medication is injected around small nerves called the medial branch nerves. These carry signals to and from the facet joints. The anesthetic will temporarily block sensation in these nerves.

End of Procedure

If the temporary injection relieves the patient's pain, the physician may inject a more long-lasting anesthetic. If the temporary injection does not relieve the pain, the physician may test nearby facet joints to identify the correct one.



Pre-Procedural Instructions: Medial Branch Block

Please pay close attention to the following information/instructions:

If you are currently on antibiotics or being treated for an infection, please call the office prior to your injection appointment.

1. You have been scheduled for a medial branch block. This procedure is a diagnostic injection to test whether or not the facet joints along the spine are a source of your pain.
2. You will be receiving an injection of local anesthetic. The length of pain relief is anticipated to be 4–6 hours only. This procedure is not expected to result in long-term pain relief.
3. We typically do not recommend sedation for this procedure, as you need to be awake and alert immediately following to determine how much relief you got from the injections as you perform daily activities (walking, standing, cleaning, shopping, etc).
4. In the event that you have severe anxiety about your procedure and prefer to have a light sedative prescribed before your appointment, please notify our office at least 24 hours in advance. IV sedation is available in office for an additional fee and advanced notice is required. You must have fasted for at least 8 hours if you elect to have IV sedation.
5. You may also choose to have the procedure done with General Anesthesia at the Surgery Center. This is an option for patients that cannot tolerate local anesthesia or have medical conditions that exclude them from having the procedure done in office. Please note, there will be a separate facility fee from the surgery center in addition to the cost for our physician to perform the procedure.
6. We do not anticipate that you will experience any weakness or numbness in the extremities. Nevertheless, it is suggested that you bring a driver to your appointment if possible.
7. On the day of your appointment, please refrain from eating or drinking 4 hours before your appointment time. You may eat and drink immediately following your injection.
8. If you take routine medications, you may take these on the day of your injection as scheduled with a small sip of water.
9. If you are on any blood thinning medication (Plavix®, Coumadin®, Aggrenox®, Lovenox®, Xarelto®, aspirin), you will not need to necessarily hold them prior to these injections.