

Cardiff Spinal Clinic

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Facet Joint Denervation:

If facet joint injections/medial branch blocks have helped but not given long lasting relief then a minimally invasive procedure can be performed to try and give long lasting relief. This involves using x-ray guidance and placing a needle down onto the back of the facet joint to destroy the small pain fibres to the joint.

Before the procedure: it is usually done as an out-patient treatment under sedation. If you take blood thinning medication, please let my secretary know as I will need to know as well as the radiologist if it is done by them. We will need to work out, depending on which medication you take, with regards to how many days it needs to be stopped before the injection can be performed

During the procedure: the procedure is done under sedation and therefore you will be asked not to eat six hours before the procedure, but you will be allowed to have clear fluids, ie water, up to two hours before. You will be laying on your front and then the anaesthetist will give you sedation. Needles will be placed onto the back of the facet joints and a heated probe will then be used to destroy the nerves to the joint. Local anaesthetic will also be injected. There is no steroid involved in these injections.

After the procedure: you may find that the back is uncomfortable for the first week to ten days. You should have some form of therapy after the injection.

An out-patient appointment should be made for you by the nursing staff for one month following the procedure.

The risks to this procedure include infection, haematoma, nerve injury, leakage of spinal fluid. These risks are well below 1%.