

A CERVICAL MEDICAL BRANCH BLOCK

is an outpatient procedure for diagnosing and treating headaches, neck, shoulder and upper back pain.

This information has been provided by your doctor so you can better understand this procedure. Your doctor will make the best recommendation for your specific needs.

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



ABOUT US

Georgia Interventional Medicine is a premier private practice consisting of anesthesiologist, and pain management care in addition to diagnostic services and progressive rehabilitation. Our multi-specialty approach combines a variety of disciplines and allows them to perform in a single serene clinic providing patients with the most complete diagnosis and treatment available. Our medical facility is dedicated to providing excellent service where the patient will receive personal attention and care.

Our facility specializes in treating patients who have recently sustained injuries following: Motor vehicle accidents, slip and fall or work related injuries.

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CERVICAL MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK

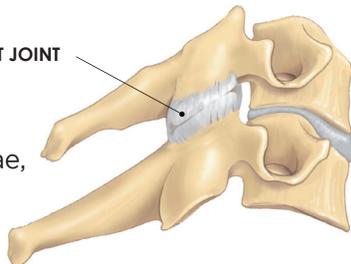
AN OUTPATIENT PROCEDURE FOR TREATING CHRONIC NECK PAIN AND HEADACHES



WHAT ARE CERVICAL FACET JOINTS?

Facet joints are found on both sides of the spine. Each is about the size of a thumbnail. Cervical facet joints are named for the vertebrae they connect and the side of the spine where they are found. The right C2-3 Facet joint, for example, joins the 2nd and 3rd vertebrae on the right side.

CERVICAL FACET JOINT



Facet joints not only connect the vertebrae, but they also guide the spine during movement.

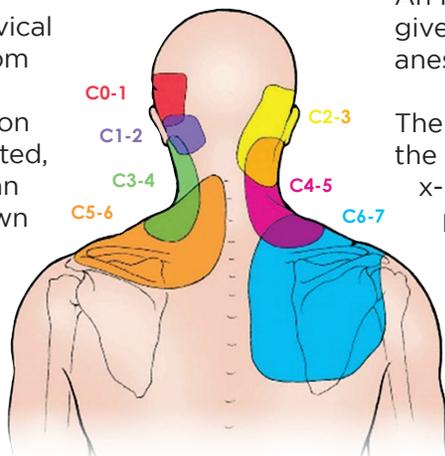
Medial branch nerves, located near facet joints, communicate pain from the facet joints. In other words, these nerves tell the brain when a facet joint has been injured.

WHAT IS CERVICAL FACET JOINT PAIN?

Cervical 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 cervical 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 head down to your shoulder blade.

The diagram shows areas of pain usually associated with specific joints.



HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE CERVICAL FACET PAIN?

If you have pain in one or more of these areas when you turn your head, and it has lasted longer than two months, you may have cervical facet pain.

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

WHAT IS CERVICAL MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK?

During this procedure, a local anesthetic (numbing medicine) is injected near the medial branch nerve. This stops the transmission of pain signals from the facet joint. If your pain is reduced and you are able to move your neck normally, then the doctor will know which facet joint has been causing your pain.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN INJECTION?

An injection may start with an IV (medicine given intravenously) to help you relax. A local anesthetic may be used to numb your skin.

The doctor will then insert a thin needle near the medial branch. Fluoroscopy, a type of x-ray, will be used to ensure the safe and proper position of the needle. A dye will also be injected to make sure the needle is in the correct spot. Once your physician is sure the needle is correctly placed, the medicine will be injected.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INJECTION?

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

You may want to check for pain by moving your neck in ways that hurt before the injection, but do not overdo it. You may feel immediate pain relief and numbness in your neck and upper back for a brief period of time after the injection. This means the medication has reached the right spot.

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?

How long you can expect pain relief depends on how many areas are injured, and on the amount of inflammation.

If your pain goes away for a short time, but then returns, you may be a candidate for radiofrequency ablation (RFA) to the medial branch nerve. This procedure provides a more permanent disruption of pain signals.

