

Here to help

Our **Health Information Centre (HIC)** provides advice and information on a wide range of health-related topics.

We also offer:

- Services for people with disabilities.
- Information in large print, Braille and Easy Read formats.
- Information on audio tape and CD-ROM.
- A service to provide information in a language other than English.

Contact the **HIC** on: **01392 402071**

For **RD&E services** log on to:
www.rdehospital.nhs.uk

Smoking is not allowed by anyone on any of the RD&E sites.

For information on how to stop smoking, see your GP before coming into hospital or phone the **Stop Smoking Service** on **0845 111 1142**. This is a local service run by NHS Devon.

Patients and visitors involved in, or witness to, an accident on Trust property are encouraged to report it immediately to a staff member so that the matter can be properly reported and dealt with.

Reference Number: TO 09 001 002

October 2012 (review date: October 2015)

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

© **Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust**

Designed by the Graphics Department, RD&E

Facet Joint Injections for Lumbar Spine

Royal Devon and Exeter **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information

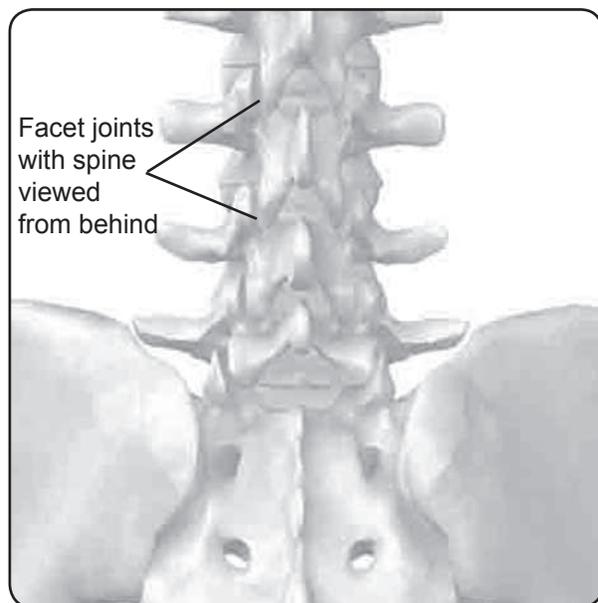
Facet Joint Injections for Lumbar Spine

Respond Deliver & Enable

Low back pain is a very common condition. In the vast majority of cases, it is not serious but is very troublesome. If the pain is coming from the facet joints, a specific injection into these joints can reduce inflammation and provide pain relief and also help to clarify where back pain is coming from.

The Facet Joints

The facet joints are small joints at the back of the spine - see diagram below:



These joints help provide mobility in the spine but can cause pain if they become inflamed. Typically, the patient complains of pain when bending backwards if these joints are the cause.

Procedure

The injection into and around the facet joints is performed as a day-case procedure. It may be performed in the orthopaedic operating theatres, in the pain clinic or in the radiology department. You will be lying on your stomach. X-rays are used to help guide the needle into and around the joint. The injection consists of a local anaesthetic and some steroid solution being placed into and around the joint. You will be allowed home soon after the procedure but will need someone to take you.

Following the Procedure

You will be able to return to your normal activities the day after the injection. We will usually see you again in the out-patient clinic a few weeks later to find out if the procedure has helped. It is important that you keep a record of whether you feel the injection helped, both on the day it was performed and also over the next few weeks.

Risks of the Injections

There are very few risks associated with facet joint injections. Some patients find the injections uncomfortable. This is a temporary problem. Other rare risks include allergic reaction to the medication used, injury to the nerves or coating

around the nerves near the joint, infection and bleeding.

If you notice redness or swelling around the injection site, or if you develop a high temperature, or if you feel generally unwell after the injection, contact your GP.

How Effective are the Injections?

The effectiveness of the injections is variable. For some people it can get rid of their back pain permanently, and for others for weeks or months. Unfortunately, no treatment is guaranteed to work, and for some people the injections are not helpful. It is very important to understand that as your back pain improves after the injection, you need to start a regular exercise programme under the supervision of a physiotherapist to strengthen the muscles around the spine, to work on your fitness, and to begin normal movement again. This combination of injection and exercise gives the best chance for long term improvement in your back complaint.

Contact Numbers

Mr. Chan's secretary 01392 403696

Mr. Hutton's secretary 01392 403568

Mr. Khan's secretary 01392 406352

Mr. Clarke's secretary 01392 406352