

## Will this procedure help?

- This procedure helps some people more than others
- If the injection helps your pain, you may benefit from radiofrequency lesioning, which lasts longer
- Your doctor or nurse practitioner will discuss this with you

## You should not have this procedure if:

- You are allergic to any of the medicines that will be used
- You did not stop taking your blood-thinning medicine
- You have an infection

## How should I prepare for this procedure?

**Stop taking** the following medications prior to your procedure:

Coumadin/Warfarin .....5 days before  
Plavix/Clopidogrel.....7 days before  
Pradax/Dabigatran.....3 days before

### Note:

Don't hesitate to ask your doctor or NP about stopping your medication

- Your doctor will tell you if you need an INR (blood test) before the injection

- Please take all of your other medicines at their regular times

- Eat a light meal the day of your procedure

- Plan to take it easy for the rest of the day following your procedure

### Note:

If you receive sedation, be sure to read the Procedural Sedation patient information with your doctor or nurse practitioner.

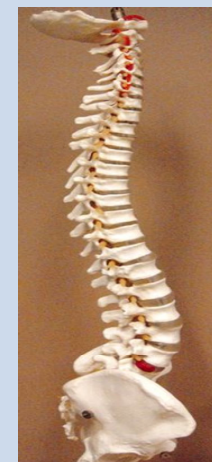
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## Medial and Lateral Branch Block: Lumbar, Cervical, or Sacral



## Pain Management Clinic



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## What is a medial branch block?

- A medial branch block is an injection of local freezing to block the nerve to a facet joint
- Facet joints are small joints between each of the bones in the spine
- Inflammation in a facet joint causes pain
- The injection is given to reduce pain from the joint

## Signs of inflammation

Cervical facet joints:

- An ache in your neck that moves across to your shoulders or arms
- The pain is worse when you turn your head to the side or look up

Thoracic facet joints:

- Pain in your upper back, chest or arm

Lumbar facet joints:

- An ache in your lower back, radiating down your back to your buttocks and upper thighs
- The pain is worse when you stand or bend backwards

## What medicines are injected?

- Your doctor or nurse practitioner (NP) will inject local freezing
- A steroid medication may be given to decrease inflammation

## Will I be “put out” for this procedure?

- The procedure is done using local freezing
- Your doctor or NP may give you some medicine to make you feel sleepy

## Before the procedure

- Your doctor or NP will talk to you
- They will ask you to sign a consent form
- Allow one hour for your visit

## During the procedure

- The procedure will use x-ray
- A doctor or NP, an x-ray technician, and a nurse will take care of you
- You will lie on your stomach for back injections
- You will lie on your back for neck injections
- Your skin will be washed before the freezing medicine is given

## Will it hurt?

- You will feel a pinch and some burning
- You will feel pressure from the needle
- Your doctor or NP will inject more freezing if you feel pain

## After the procedure

- Your nurse will watch you for one hour
- The injected area may feel numb or weak for a few hours
- Your pain may become less after the injection
- You may not notice any difference
- You may be asked to keep a pain diary to see if the injection worked for you

## What are the risks and side effects?

Side effects from the procedure may include:

- discomfort at the injection site
- infection
- bleeding
- nerve damage
- No relief from your usual pain

Side effects from the injected steroid may include:

- Weight gain
- Increase in blood sugar
- Water retention
- Suppression of your body's production of steroids
- Temporary suppression of your immune system