

The UAB Pain Treatment Clinic

FACET MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK



Back Pain and Degenerative Joint Disease

Any joint in the body has the potential to become inflamed, break down, and cause pain. Facet joints are the joints that join two vertebrae. The nerves that supply these joints are the medial branches.

Pain from these joints and nerves are experienced as back pain, hip pain, and pain going down the leg just above the knee joint.

This pain can be treated by injecting numbing medicine (local anesthetics) and steroids directly around the medial branch nerves or into the facet joints. Pain relief can last for weeks to months.

If these blocks are effective, the nerves can be destroyed with radiofrequency ablation to provide longer lasting pain relief.

The Procedure

The patient is placed in the face down position on the procedure table. An IV is started and sedation is given for relaxation and to relieve anxiety. The skin over the back is cleaned with a germ-killing solution to help prevent infection. The skin on the back is then injected with numbing medicine (local anesthetic). A needle is then placed next to the medial branch nerve or into the facet joint under X-ray guidance. After proper needle placement is confirmed, numbing medicine (local anesthetic) and steroid are injected.



Side Effects and Risks

- ✓ Bleeding and infection
- ✓ Soreness at the injection site
- ✓ Temporary weakness of legs
- ✓ Nerve damage
- ✓ Injection into spinal fluid
- ✓ Injection into blood stream

The Day of Your Procedure

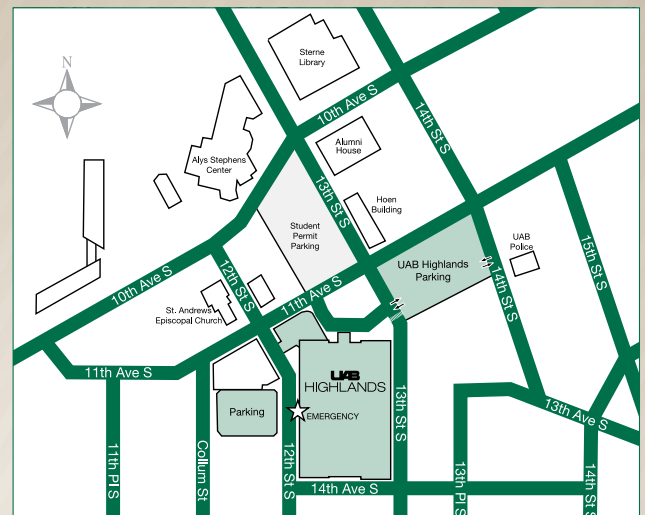
- Do not eat or drink anything for six hours before the procedure since this increases your risk of nausea and vomiting.
- Please have a driver accompany you to your appointment. Your driver must stay through the duration of your appointment. If you do not have a driver, your appointment will be rescheduled.
- Follow the directions your doctor gave you concerning your blood thinners (including Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, Ticlid, Pletal, and Pradaxa). They increase your risk of bleeding.
- If you are not feeling well or have been placed on antibiotics since your last appointment with us, please call us before your procedure.
- You may not be able to receive your block if you do not follow these recommendations.

After the Procedure

You will stay in the recovery area for about 30 minutes. You may then go home with your driver.

Notify the clinic or go to the emergency room if your pain is worse, you have leg weakness, or you have difficulty with your bowel or bladder.

Take note of how much pain relief you experience and how long the pain relief lasts. Discuss this with your doctor at your next visit.



The Pain Treatment Clinic

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- We are located on the 3rd floor of UAB Highlands.
- Entrance to the Pain Treatment Clinic is located next to the Emergency Room entrance.
- Free parking is across the street in the deck.