

Important Notes

Do not stop any anti-platelet/ anti-coagulant medications (eg. Aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin, etc.) unless instructed to do so by a HealthPointe Physician.

Please arrive with your pain level 5/10 or greater to ensure that you will be able to notice the effects of the injection. If your pain level is less than 5/10, your injection may be rebooked.

You may want to avoid taking pain medications on the day of the procedure.

please feel free to contact our clinic at 780-453-5255

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Cervical Medial Branch Block



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What is a Cervical Medial Branch Block (MBB)?

This outpatient procedure is used to help with diagnosing, neck, shoulder, and upper back pain

What are Cervical Facet Joints?

Facet joints are found on either side of the spine. Each of these joints is about the size of a thumbnail. There are 7 vertebrae in the cervical spine that are connected by facet joints.

Facet joints connect vertebrae to one another along with guiding the spine when moving.

Medial branch nerves are located near facet joints. They communicate pain from facet joints to the brain. Therefore the nerves tell the brain when the facet joint has been irritated.

Injury to a facet joint typically involves damage to cartilage inside the joint and the connecting ligaments surrounding the joint.

Pain from an injured cervical joint may range from mild muscle tension to more severe pain. This pain can radiate into different areas, often the shoulder blade area, depending on which facet joint is irritated.

Do I have Cervical Facet Joint Pain?

If you have pain for greater than 2 months in the head, neck, shoulder, or upper back area you may have facet joint pain.

Tests such as X-rays or MRIs do not always show if the facet is the reason for your pain. The best way to test if you have this pain is to block the pain signal from the medial branch nerve.

A Cervical Medial Branch Block disrupts the function of the cervical medial branch nerve temporarily. The medial branch nerve is then no longer able to transmit pain signals from the affected facet joint to the brain.

Medial Branch Block Procedure

A thin needle is inserted near the facet joint under fluoroscopy (a type of X-ray). Fluoroscopy is used to position the needle accurately and safely. A small amount of dye is used by the Physician to assess if the needle is in the proper position. This injected dye can cause some discomfort.

With the correct needle position the area will be numbed with anesthetic medications.

How Long Should the Pain Relief Last?

After your Cervical Medial Branch Block procedure you will be monitored for approximately 15-30 minutes. The clinic will give you appropriate directions to follow as well as complete a pain diary. This pain diary is very important as it will guide the Physician's treatment plan for you.

We caution against driving after any neck procedures.

Pain relief will last for approximately 4-6 hours, and then the anesthetic wears off. Short-term pain relief is considered a positive test. The Physician will then determine the next step in your treatment plan.

Post-procedure soreness may be experienced. Typically this soreness is caused by muscle and nerve irritation.