

Important Notes

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

Questions or Concerns

For any additional information, questions, or concerns regarding your appointment or booking process, please feel free to contact our clinic at 403-309-2001

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Thoracic Facet Joint Injection



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What is a Thoracic Facet Joint Injection?

This outpatient procedure is used to help with diagnosing and/or treating upper and middle back pain.

What are Thoracic Facet Joints?

Facet joints are found on either side of the spine. Each of these joints is about the size of a thumbnail. In the Thoracic spine, there are 12 vertebrae and ribs that are connected by facet joints.

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

Medial branch nerves are located near facet joints. They communicate pain from facet joints. Therefore these nerves tell the brain when the facet joint has been injured or hurt.

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

Pain from an injured thoracic facet joint may range from muscle tension/tightness to more severe pain. This pain can radiate into different areas, depending on which facet joint is injured/affected.

Do I have Thoracic Facet Joint Pain?

If you have pain for greater than 2 months in the upper and middle back 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.

Injection Procedure

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

With the correct needle position, the facet joint is then injected with a combination of a corticosteroid (anti-inflammatory) and an anesthetic into the irritated facet joint.

How Long Should the Pain Relief Last?

After your Thoracic Facet Joint Injection, you will be monitored for approximately 15-30 minutes. The clinic will give you appropriate directions to follow for care following the procedure.

Post-procedure soreness may be experienced. Typically this soreness is caused by muscle and nerve irritation. You may also notice some numbness and tingling in the leg and foot for a maximum of 4-6 hours.

There should be pain relief immediately lasting 4-6 hours. The corticosteroid takes about 1-week post-injection for it to take optimal effects.

Pain relief lasts anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on the ultimate cause of your facet joint pain.