



Exact Radiology  
CLINICS

## NERVE ROOT INJECTION/ FACET JOINT INJECTION/ MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCKS/ EPIDURAL

### What is a Nerve Root Injection/Facet Joint injection/Medial Branch Blocks/Epidural?

Nerve Root/Facet Joint/Medial Branch/Epidural Injections can be both diagnostic and therapeutic procedures useful for neck pain, back pain, referred pain, numbness and weakness of the arms or legs. Cortisone is injected to suppress any inflammatory effect of the condition causing the patient's symptoms. Even though the injection may not result in permanent pain relief, significant pain relief may be achieved for a prolonged period, potentially delaying surgery. Further to this, even though the relief obtained from an injection may be transient, it is a worthwhile procedure, as a good response to a cortisone injection is a reliable predictor of how patients will likely respond to surgery. Therefore injections may not always be therapeutic but they can often be diagnostic.

List of procedures that Exact Radiology offer:

- Nerve Root Injection (Cervical and Lumbar Spine)
- Facet Joint Injection (Cervical and Lumbar Spine)
- Medial Branch Blocks
- Epidural Injection

### What should I expect when I have my procedure?

The procedure generally takes 15-20 minutes, this may vary depending on your specific circumstances. The risks and possible complications will be discussed with you prior to the procedure and with your acceptance we will proceed..

You may be asked to change into an examination gown and will be placed onto a table that will position you within the CT scanner with the area of clinical interest exposed. You must lie still during the procedure as movement will blur the images. A series of planning scans will be performed which will localise the area of clinical interest. We will then mark the localised area with a skin-marking pen. The skin is then cleaned with a hospital grade antiseptic wash and a small amount of local anaesthetic is injected into this area. Once the area is anaesthetised, a small needle is passed into the joint or near the nerve, depending on the specific procedure. We will then administer a mixture of local anaesthetic and corticosteroid.

### Are there any risks or side effects from these procedures?

As with all medical procedures there are risks. Your doctor has sent you for this procedure knowing that the pain reduction provided is more beneficial than the very low risk associated with it. The skill of the operator and the design of the machine ensure you receive the lowest radiation dose possible. Female patients who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant must advise the staff, as a CT scan is usually not performed unless it is an absolute medical necessity to do so.

### What happens after I have my procedure?

Following the procedure the body part involved may feel numb and clumsy. This is to be expected. The function and sensation of the nerve will return once the local anaesthetic wears off, this is different for everyone but generally will pass within 24 hours. This is why we ask that you have someone to drive you home.



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### How do I prepare for my procedure?

When you phone to arrange your appointment one of our friendly staff will advise you of the preparation and requirements for these procedures. They may ask questions relating to previous procedures and your medical history. We will also need to know if you are currently on blood thinners such as Warfarin or Aspirin.

**Blood thinning medications that you are currently taking should be ceased prior to this procedure. This should be discussed with your Health Care Professional prior to making your appointment.**

(Aspirin and Warfarin for 5 days, Plavix for 7 days and Iscover for 8 days). If you have had a heart valve replacement, it may be necessary to take antibiotics before the procedure. Please discuss this with your Cardiologist/Cardiac Surgeon and take antibiotics as directed.

### Things to bring along to my appointment:

- Previous films for area of clinical interest.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card (as we bulk bill all eligible Medicare services).
- Referral (this is a legal requirement)
- Workcover details and claim number (if this is a Workcover claim)

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