



Sacroiliac Joint Injection

What is the sacroiliac joint and why are sacroiliac joint injections helpful? - The sacroiliac joints are large joints in the region of the low back and buttocks where the pelvis actually joins with the tailbone. If the joints become painful, they may cause pain in the low back, buttocks, abdomen, groin, or legs.

A sacroiliac joint injection serves several purposes. First, by placing numbing medicine into the joint, the amount of immediate pain relief experienced will help confirm or deny the joint as a source of pain. Additionally, steroids will help to reduce any inflammation that may exist within the joint(s).

General Pre-Injection Instructions – Be sure to tell your doctor if you have any allergies, particularly to iodine, topical or intravenous. If you are not receiving sedation, you may eat a light meal a few hours before the procedure. If you are an insulin-dependent diabetic, you must not change your normal eating pattern prior to the procedure. You may take your routine medications (i.e., high blood pressure and diabetic medications, e.g., Glucophage). However, you will need to take only half of your usual dose of insulin the day of the procedure. You should continue to take pain medications but hold anti-inflammatory medications the day of the procedure. If you are on a blood thinner (Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, etc.), you must notify your physician's office so the timing of the discontinuation of these medications can be explained. **A driver must accompany the patient and be responsible for getting him/her home.**

What happens during the procedure? – You are placed on an x-ray table on your stomach. The x-ray machine is positioned so that the physician can best visualize these joints in the back using x-ray guidance. The skin on the low back is scrubbed using antibacterial soap. Next, the physician numbs a small area of skin with numbing medicine. This medicine stings for several seconds. After the numbing medicine has been given time to be effective, the physician directs a very small needle using x-ray guidance into the joint. A small amount of contrast (dye) is injected to ensure proper needle position inside the joint space. Then, a small mixture of numbing medicine (local anesthetic) and anti-inflammatory (steroid) is injected. One or both joints may be injected depending on the location of your usual pain.

The physician will use an x-ray machine during this procedure. If you are pregnant, it is important to inform your physician.

What happens after the procedure? - Immediately after the procedure, you will be asked to get off the x-ray table and imitate actions that would normally bring about your usual pain. You are then asked to report the percentage of pain relief.

There are no restrictions to food or liquid intake or to activity unless specified by your doctor. A follow-up appointment will be made. The leg(s) may feel weak or numb for a few hours. This is somewhat uncommon, but does occasionally happen. You may be referred to a physical therapist immediately after the injection(s) while the numbing medicine is still working for manipulation or massage.

No driving is allowed on the day of the procedure. You must bring someone to drive you home after the procedure.