



Medial Branch Block

What is a medial branch block?

A medial branch block, also known as a facet injection, is a diagnostic procedure used to determine if arthritis of the spine is the source of your pain. It involves blocking the medial branch nerve, which supplies feeling to the joints in our spine, with a local anesthetic. Medial branch blocks can be performed in the cervical, thoracic, or lumbar areas of the spine. **If your pain is indeed coming from arthritis in your spine, you will experience fairly rapid pain relief following the procedure, however it will only last a few hours. It is very important that you monitor your pain level during the first few hours after your procedure.** Medial branch blocks are typically performed in a series of two, each two weeks apart. The number of blocks and the timing between them is generally dictated by your insurance. If the procedure is successful, a more long-term treatment option, radiofrequency ablation, can be pursued.

What can I expect during this procedure?

Your procedure will be performed at an outpatient surgery center. You will be asked to arrive 45 minutes before your procedure time. You will first meet with a nurse in the pre-operative area. They will review your medical history, including all current medications and allergies. You will be asked to change into a medical gown prior to the procedure. If you choose to receive light sedation, an IV will be started. You will then be taken to the procedure room and positioned on the procedure table. The procedure generally takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Following your procedure, you will be taken to the recovery area to rest for 15 to 30 minutes before being discharged home.

If you are taking any blood thinning medications (i.e. aspirin, Eliquis, Plavix, etc.), please notify our office. It is important we provide you with instructions on holding these medications if necessary. Additionally, if you are taking any antibiotics or have an active infection, it is important you notify our office. We may need to delay your procedure until your infection has cleared.

If you choose to receive sedation for your procedure: you may not have anything to eat or drink for eight (8) hours prior to your procedure. You may take your regular medications with a small sip of water. You must also have a responsible adult (over the age of 18) accompany you and remain on surgery center premises during your procedure to assume your care upon discharge. Your responsible adult must be present at the time you check in for your procedure. Taxi cabs and rideshares are not permitted (unless you have a responsible adult present to accompany you). For your safety, we cannot make exceptions to these requirements.

What is the anticipated recovery from the procedure?

Recovery from this procedure is typically brief. You may experience minor discomfort and soreness at the injection site for the first few days. You will receive detailed discharge instructions at the time of your procedure. You are encouraged to call our office should you have any questions. A member of our staff will call you 24 hours following your procedure to determine if you received pain relief from the procedure. It is important to monitor and record your pain levels for the first 5 hours following your procedure, while also performing movements/tasks that typically generate your pain.

Rembrandt Surgery Center phone number: (480) 809-6266

The Pain Experts of Arizona phone number: (480) 550-9393