

## **CT-guided facet joint injection of the lumbar spine**

The facet joint injection (FJI), to which your doctor has referred you, switches off pain targeted. Sometimes the pain states can be turned off by the facet joint block in the long term e.g. by specifically relaxing pain-induced cramps of muscles and/or vessels. The block can also be used to identify the causes of pain (diagnostic block).

Several sessions are usually required for treatment. If you are free of symptoms, we ask you to inform us by telephone - at the latest one day before the next treatment, as further injections are then no longer necessary.

The therapy is carried out on an outpatient basis, which means you can **leave the doctors office with a companion** after the end of the treatment. Because of the after-effects, you must **not drive yourself or otherwise participate in traffic**, work on running machines or similar after the therapy unless instructed differently for at least 8 hours.

**Please have someone pick you up!** Allow approx. **15 min. for the treatment** and **30 min. for follow-up** in our rooms.

### **Please bring a towel with you!!!**

The examination is performed with the help of computer tomography (CT). In total you will need to lie in a prone position for just under 15 minutes for planning and the actual injection.

At first a planning image is created with a minimal dose of X-rays, which is used to calculate the needle position to the millimeter. After marking the region to be punctured, the skin at the puncture site is cleaned with a disinfectant.

During the procedure, please lie still and breathe shallowly.

The attending physician then inserts a thin hypodermic needle into the joints of the spine under CT control.

After checking the position of the needle, the pain reliever/anesthetic/medication is injected. The puncture through the skin is usually hardly painful. When reaching the nerve root moderate, possibly radiating pain may occur for a short time. If the needle touches a nerve while searching for the correct injection site, this can briefly trigger an "electrifying" sensation. Some patients experience a slight warming sensation.

The anesthetic takes effect after about 15 minutes for one to several hours. The sensation of pain is usually eliminated for the same duration.

During the period of action, you may not be able to move the leg or only to a limited extent.

## **POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS**

Life-threatening complications (e.g. cardiovascular or respiratory arrest) and severe intolerance are extremely rare.

Injury to nearby organs and vessels cannot be completely ruled out. Bruising is rare, an increase in pain lasting for a few days or inflammation may result. **Therefore, you must discontinue blood-thinning medication 3 days before!** If necessary, ask your general practitioner if this is possible.

Extremely rare is nerve damage with permanent paralysis.

Anesthetics and other medications that we use as part of the block may have unwanted side effects. The doctor will talk to you about possible problems.

**Please be sure to bring all previous medical records and images with you to the examination!**