

**DEPARTMENT OF DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY AND NUCLEAR MEDICINE  
SECTION OF NEURORADIOLOGY**

**PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET  
Lumbar Facet Joint Injection**

**Indications for the Procedure:** Lumbar Facet Joint Injection is a treatment to reduce or stop lower back joint pain and/or leg pain.

**Description of the Procedure:** Lumbar Facet Joint Injection is a therapeutic procedure involving the injection of an anesthetic steroid drug mixture into a joint of the lower spine, in order to reduce pain. The patient is placed on his/her stomach on the X-ray table. The skin of the back is cleaned with an antiseptic that contains iodine. The skin and deeper tissues of the lower back are numbed with lidocaine, an anesthetic drug (numbing medicine). With X-ray fluoroscopic guidance, a thin needle is placed into a joint of the lower back. A small amount of X-ray dye is injected through the needle into the facet joint to confirm the correct location of the needle. X-ray pictures may be taken of this location. Then, an anesthetic and steroid mixture for pain relief is injected into the joint. At the end of the procedure, the needle is withdrawn from the back, and the tiny puncture mark is covered with a Band-Aid. The patient is either observed in the X-ray department for 1-2 hours or returned to his/her hospital room for observation.

**Risks of the Procedure:** Serious complications from this procedure are very rare. Sometimes there may be bleeding within or outside of the spine or at the puncture site, local infection at the puncture site or in the spine, allergic reaction to the contrast material, injury to nerves, or continued back and/or leg pain.

**Alternatives to the Procedure:** The alternative to Lumbar Facet Joint Injection is taking medication for pain by mouth or surgery on the back joint.

**Probable Consequences of Refusing the Procedure:** The patient's physician may not be able to reduce or stop the back and/or leg pain.

**Person(s) Performing the Procedure:** The key portions of the procedure will be performed by an attending physician who is a member of the medical staff of Rush University Medical Center, or a fellow or resident in Neuroradiology who will be observed and supervised by a member of the medical staff. Residents and fellows are licensed physicians. Fellows have completed a residency in radiology and are in an approved post-residency training program. Residents are in training in an approved residency program. The parts of the procedures fellows or residents will perform will be based on their level of training and competence.