

DIAGNOSTIC MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK

A medial branch block is an injection of a strong local anesthetic onto the medial branch nerves that supply the facet joints. The facet joints are part of the bony framework of the spine that can become arthritic, and therefore painful.

This procedure is a **diagnostic test**, meaning **any pain relief is expected to be temporary**. It may be different than previous injections you have had where steroid was used to try to produce a more therapeutic, long-lasting response. If you have the appropriate duration of pain relief after the medial branch nerve block (typically 4-6 hours), then you may be a candidate for the medial branch radiofrequency neurotomy (or ablation), which offers longer term pain relief (typically 6-15 months). Most insurance plans require that you successfully complete two medial branch block procedures before they authorize the ablation.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROCEDURE

- Please avoid taking any pain medication at least 6 hours prior to the scheduled procedure. You must present with some amount of pain on the day of your procedure. If your pain level is a zero, the procedure may be cancelled.
- After the procedure you will be instructed to perform the daily activities normally found to cause your discomfort or pain. That will indicate whether the numbing medicine is covering your pain.
- You will be given a post injection PAIN DIARY form to complete. **It is very important that you complete this form** and bring it to your follow-up appointment.
- At your follow-up appointment, Dr. Bojrab will review the PAIN DIARY and discuss your post procedure results. It will then be determined if a repeat medial branch block is appropriate, or if alternative treatment would be more beneficial.