

Patient Instruction Sheet for FACET JOINT NERVE BLOCKS

You are scheduled for facet joint nerve block. This is a diagnostic test used to decide if a patient's pain is coming from the facet joints. X-rays of the spine may suggest arthritis in these joints but this test is required to confirm the diagnosis of facet joint pain. The injection should provide relief of pain for a few hours. If this is successful, another procedure is used to give longer pain relief.

PREPARATION:

- 1) Facet joint nerve blocks are performed without sedation.
- 2) Notify the nurse at Saint Thomas Outpatient Neurosurgical Center if you are allergic to **iodine**, **X-ray dye**, or **seafood**.
- 3) Notify the nurse at Saint Thomas Outpatient Neurosurgical Center if you are female and have not had menopause (change of life), hysterectomy, or a tubal ligation (tubes tied).
- 4) Take your regular medications the morning of your procedure **EXCEPT** for drugs that "thin" your blood. These include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen, Motrin, Naprosyn, Feldine, etc.), **Persantine** (dipyridamole), **Plavix** (clopidogrel), **Ticlid** (ticlopidine), **Pletal** (cilostazol), etc.
- 5) If you take the blood thinning medications **Coumadin** (Warfarin), **Dicumerol**, or **Miradon** (anisidone), have the physician that prescribes the listed medication discontinue it **5 days** before the procedure. You **MUST** have the prescribing physician fax documentation stating it is ok to stop the medication. Please fax to (615-347-3427) no later than 2 days before your procedure.
- 6) **STOP** taking **Persantine** (dipyridamole), **Plavix** (clopidogrel), and **Pletal** (cilostazol) **7 days** before the procedure **AFTER** discussing this with the physician that prescribes the listed medication. Please fax appropriate documentation for stopping this medication for **7 days** to (615-341-3427). Stop taking **Ticlid** (ticlopidine) fourteen days before the procedure **AFTER** discussing this with the prescribing physician.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE:

The pain doctor or his nurse will meet you. He/she will explain the procedure, its risks, and potential complications. You may ask questions about the injection at that time.

Be sure to arrive **THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED PROCEDURE TIME**. Allow extra driving time for traffic conditions in Nashville. If you are late, the procedure may need to be rescheduled.

DURING THE PROCEDURE:

You will lie on the X-ray table and your skin will be cleaned with an iodine solution (Betadine, Duraprep, etc.). The special injection needle will be placed using X-ray guidance. The local anesthetic will then be injected after X-ray dye has confirmed proper needle location after the block.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- 1) Let your driver take you home. Take your regular medicine as prescribed except for blood thinning medications: resume those the day after the injection.
- 2) Carry out your normal activities. Do things that would normally bring on your pain.
- 3) Complete the "Patient Pain Diary" and mail it back to the office.
- 4) The scheduling office will notify you of your next appointment after your pain diary has been reviewed.
- 5) Notify the Saint Thomas Outpatient Neurosurgical Center at (615-327-9543) or go to the nearest emergency room if you develop **fever**, **chills**, **new arm or leg weakness**, **new arm or leg numbness**, **severe pain**, **headache**, or **loss of bowel/bladder control**.