

SI (Sacroiliac) Joint Injections

1. What is the SI Joint?

The Sacroiliac Joint (SI) joint is the connection between the iliac bone and the sacrum.

2. Who would benefit from SI Joint injections?

Patients experiencing degenerative joint disease or arthritis in the SI joint or patients with a history of sacroiliitis would benefit from SI joint injections. These injections are also useful in diagnosing SI joint dysfunction.

3. Why are these injections effective?

SI joint injections are performed to decrease irritation of the nerves in the SI joint. A small quantity of steroid and local anesthetic are injected into the SI joint to decrease the inflammation that the injury or arthritis has caused.

4. How is this injection performed?

The SI joint injection is performed by the physician using X-ray guidance. The use of X-ray guidance helps ensure that the injection is accurate and adds a measure of safety for the patient.

You will be positioned on the X-ray table in a face down position. After the physician cleans the skin, a local anesthetic is used to numb the area. The physician places the needle into the SI joint and injects the medication. Many patients report some discomfort during the injection. Any pain or discomfort should be reported to the nurse or the physician.

5. How soon will the treatment help?

You may experience a decrease in pain within 15-20 minutes after the injection. This is due to the local anesthetic that has been injected into the SI joint. The pain may return later in the day after the effects of the local anesthetic have worn off. The steroid that has been injected into the SI joint usually takes 48-72 hours to reduce the pain that you have experienced. The steroid is the medication that will provide long term relief of your pain.

6. How often can these injections be repeated?

SI joint injections may be repeated as soon as two weeks if you have noticed a decrease in your pain. You may have three SI joint injections in a six month period.

7. Are there risks or complications with SI joint injections?

As with any procedure, there is the potential for problems. The risks are minimal with SI joint injections. Problems that could occur include:

- ◆ Slight bleeding at the injection site.
- ◆ Infection
- ◆ Temporary weakness or numbness in the leg on the side that was injected.

8. What are the benefits of SI joint injections?

- ◆ Decrease in pain
- ◆ Return of movement and mobility

9. How should I care for myself after the injection?

You should rest on the day of the injection and may resume your usual activities the following day.

If the injection site is uncomfortable, you may apply ice to the injection site 20 minutes on/20 minutes off on the day of the injection. After 24 hours, you may use ice or heat at the injection site. Again, 20 minutes on/ 20 minutes off. Please do not let either ice or heat at the site for more than 20 minutes at a time.