Lumbar Facet Joint Injections

One-page summary of the full Spinemathema guide. Scan the QR code for the full guide, with references and audio.

Key points

- Facet joints are small paired joints at the back of each spinal level that let the spine bend and twist.
- Wear and tear can inflame them, causing low back pain that may spread to the buttocks, groin or thighs.
- An X-ray-guided injection of steroid and/or local anaesthetic can ease the pain and help confirm its source.
- The injection works best as a springboard for exercise, not as a treatment on its own.
- Serious complications are uncommon; most people go home the same day.

Contact your team or seek urgent help if you notice:

- A temperature above 38°C, or swelling, redness, heat or discharge at the injection site
- A new, unusual headache, a stiff neck or nausea
- A headache when standing that has not settled after a few days, which can follow a small spinal fluid leak
- Numbness, tingling or weakness lasting more than 24 hours
- Difficulty passing urine or holding your urine, numbness around your bottom or genitals, or loss of bowel control: call 999 or go to A&E

For urgent advice, call NHS 111. In an emergency, call 999 or go to A&E.

Not sure how urgent it is? Call NHS 111. More warning signs: spinemathema.com/warning-signs

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General information only, not personal medical advice.
If you are worried about your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, or in an emergency call 999.

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Scan for the full guide