

EMORY PAIN CENTER

Sacroiliac Joint Injection

What is sacroiliac joint? There is a sacroiliac joint on either side of the sacrum. They are located between the sacrum (large triangular bone at the base of spine) and the ilia (the wing bones of the hip). While the joint itself only moves a slight amount, there may be conditions that limit or increase this movement and lead to sacroiliac joint dysfunction, which is a recognized source of low back, buttock, groin and thigh pain.

What are the indications for sacroiliac joint injection: If your physician believes your sacroiliac joint is a source of your low back pain, a sacroiliac joint injection may be recommended.

How is sacroiliac joint injection done? The joint can be identified using a movable x-ray machine (fluoroscope), and they can be injected with a local anesthetic (numbing medication, such as lidocaine) and a powerful anti-inflammatory corticosteroid medication to relieve your pain.

How effective is sacroiliac joint injection? It can take two days up to two weeks to notice the full benefit of the injection, and the duration of benefit typically ranges from three months to six months. If your pain returns, your physician may recommend repeating this procedure, or may recommend a different procedure.

What are the side effects/risks of sacroiliac joint injection? With all minimally invasive interventional procedures, there is a very low risk of infection, bleeding, an increase in pain levels or a lack of relief, the potential for allergic or other adverse reactions to the injected medications, as well as extremely rare but serious complications, such as permanent paralysis, numbness or death. Steroid medications may cause a temporary (1-2 weeks) increase in your blood sugar level if you are diabetic. The sacroiliac injection also has the unlikely possibility to cause temporary (2-8 hours) weakness or numbness in the leg if numbing medicine spills from the joint onto the nearby sciatic nerve.