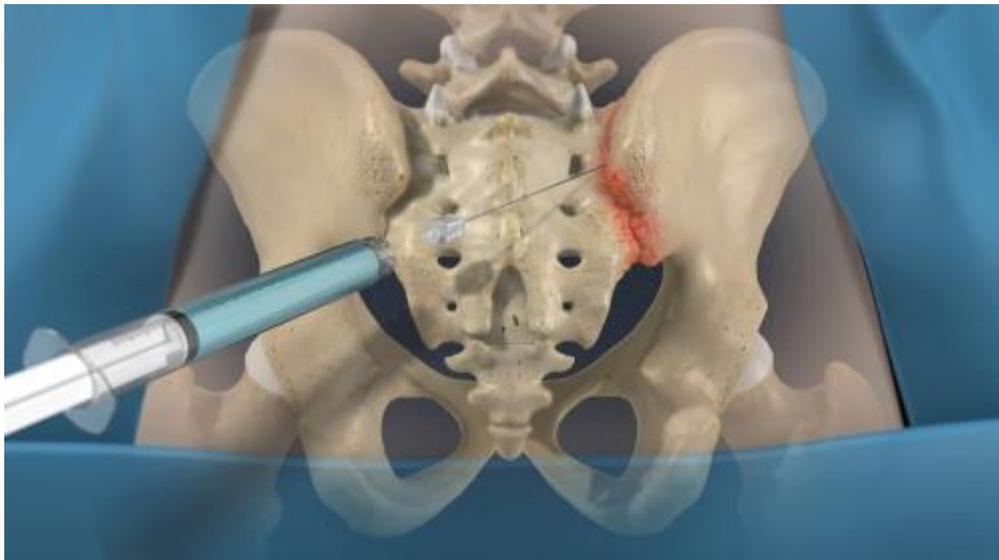




Sacroiliac Joint Injections & Radiofrequency Neurotomy

What is the Sacroiliac Joint?

The sacroiliac joint is located between the sacrum (at the base of the spine) and the pelvis. This joint may cause pain in the lower back, buttocks and thighs with degenerative changes or arthritis.



What is a Sacroiliac Joint Injection?

Local anaesthetic is injected into the sacroiliac joint (or sometimes beside the nerves that supply the joint) to determine whether or not the sacroiliac joint is the source of pain. This is a diagnostic procedure and the effect only lasts between 4-72 hours.

What is a Radiofrequency Neurotomy or Ablation?

The aim of neurotomy or ablation is to interrupt the nerve supply to the joints, so decreasing the pain signals being sent to your brain. A special needle is placed beside the relevant nerve and a radiofrequency signal is passed down the needle causing the needle tip to heat up and cauterize the nerve at approximately 85 degrees Celsius and interrupt the nerve supply. This procedure is usually offered after a positive response to sacroiliac joint injections or nerve blocks.



How long will the pain relief last after a sacroiliac joint radiofrequency neurotomy?

A radiofrequency neurotomy may provide pain relief on average for 9-12 months. The procedure may not always be effective – even if the nerve blocks were effective. This procedure does not give permanent pain relief as the nerves eventually recover from the procedure and the pain can return. The procedure can be repeated if desired. This procedure does not treat the underlying arthritis in the joints.

What does the procedure involve?

The block is performed in the operating room under sterile conditions using image intensification (x-rays) to guide the precise placement of a small needle. A special piece of equipment is used to deliver the correct energy to the target. Some local anaesthetic and steroid is used to minimise discomfort afterwards.

Monitored anaesthesia care is administered for patient comfort and sedation.

What happens after the procedure?

The procedure itself takes between 20-40 minutes. Most of this is identifying the exact location of the anatomy. The patient is transferred to the recovery room and back to the ward. It may take a number of days for the effect of the treatment to be appreciated. Some local discomfort should respond to simple painkillers and cold packs. You will be advised to rest for the first 24 hours but can gently return to normal activities over the next few days.

Importantly the procedure may need to be repeated if the pain returns. This is not always the case. Patients can typically expect to get between 8 to 12 months good quality relief. Sometimes this may be as long as 18 months.

In the case of numbness, which has not gone away after 24 hours, or any loss of control over bladder or bowel, you should contact PainMedSA, or attend an Emergency Department and ask that they contact us if it is after hours.