

Sacroiliac Joint Injection

For treating low back, hip, buttocks, or upper leg pain

What is the sacroiliac joint (SI joint)?

The sacroiliac joint connects the sacrum (triangular bone at the bottom of the spine) with the pelvis (iliac bone that is part of the hip joint) on each side of the lower spine. It transmits all the forces of the upper body to the pelvis and legs. There is not a lot of motion in the joint and it is very strong and stable.



Mechanism of injury treated with an SI injection:

It is not clearly understood why sacroiliac joint dysfunction occurs, although some believe it is due to a limitation in its normal motion patterns and/or misalignment of the joint. Inflammation occurs and confounds the issue. Sacroiliac joint (SI joint) pain typically results in pain on one side very low in the back or in the buttocks. Another term for sacroiliac joint pain is sacroiliitis, a term that describes inflammation in the joint.

How do I know if I have SI problems?

It could be a dull or sharp. It starts at your SI joint, but it can move to your buttocks, thighs, groin, or upper back. Sometimes standing up triggers the pain, and a lot of times you feel it only on one side of your lower back. You may notice that it bothers you more in the morning and gets better during the day.

It's more common than you might think. About 15%-30% of people who hurt like this have a problem with the SI joint. More common in women.

What is a sacroiliac joint injection?

In this type of injection, a local anesthetic with a steroid is injected into your SI joint. The injection can be used as a diagnosis and a treatment as the only true diagnosis for SI joint problems is relief with local anesthesia injection. If the injection immediately lessens your pain then your provider will know that your SI joint is causing your pain (diagnosis). A steroid is also used to treat inflammation inside the SI joint. The steroid may relieve your pain for weeks, months, or even years (treatment).

What happens during an injection?

You will arrive for the procedure and be given a hospital gown. You will then be taken to the procedure room where you will be asked to move to an x ray table where you will lie on your stomach. After a sterile prep and drape local anesthetic will be used to numb your skin. The practitioner will then insert a thin spinal needle into each diseased facet joint. Fluoroscopy, a type of x-ray, must be used to ensure the safe and proper position of the needle. A dye is first injected to ensure the needle is in the correct spot to maximize safety and effectiveness. Once the needle is verified to be exactly where it needs to be the medication is injected. The needle is then withdrawn, a band aid is applied and you will be taken to a recovery area.



How long can I expect pain relief?

Depending on the amount of joint damage you have an injection can provide months to years of pain relief. If you get long term pain relief then further injections can be done in the future with similar results should the pain return.