



Facet arthropathy is degenerative arthritis of the joints in the spine. The facet joints help maintain normal alignment of the vertebrae and facilitate motion.

CAUSES

- Repeated over rotation (twisting) or arching (extension) of the back
- Normal wear and tear on the spine as a result of aging
- Previous back injury
- Vertebral fracture
- Torn ligament
- Disc problems

SYMPTOMS

- Pain, typically worse following sleep or rest
- Pain that increases with twisting and/or extension
- Pain is generally localized to the spine and does not radiate to extremities
- Muscle aches referred into the buttocks

TREATMENT

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication
 - NSAIDS help decrease swelling, pain and fever. **ALWAYS ASK YOUR PROVIDER IF NSAIDS ARE SAFE.**
- Stretching exercises and strengthening exercises to improve the endurance of muscles
- Facet joint block
 - A procedure where a numbing medicine (anesthetic) is injected into a facet joint
- Radiofrequency ablation
 - A procedure where an electric current is passed through the facet joint to deactivate the nerve that innervates it
- Surgery

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your symptoms get worse or do not improve in two to four weeks, despite treatment
- You develop numbness, weakness or loss of bladder or bowel function
- New, unexplained symptoms develop