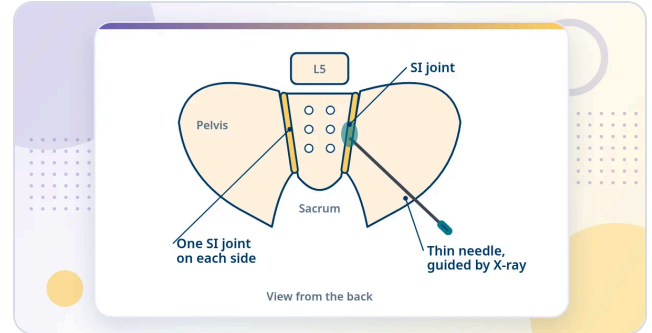


SI joint injection

Your sacroiliac (SI) joints connect the base of your spine to your pelvis, one on each side. When an SI joint is irritated, it can cause pain in the low back, buttock or hip, and sometimes down the leg. SI joint pain can look a lot like other back problems. An SI joint injection places numbing medicine, and often a steroid, into the joint. It may help in two ways: it can show whether the joint is the source of your pain, and for some people it may ease the pain for a time.

At GSMC: all GSMC providers evaluate patients and help decide which options may fit, at any of our 7 offices. Results vary.



What it is

An SI joint injection is an image-guided shot into the sacroiliac joint. It can be:

- **Diagnostic:** numbing medicine is used to see if your usual pain goes away for a few hours. If it does, the SI joint is likely a source of pain.
- **Therapeutic:** a steroid is added to calm inflammation and may give longer relief for some people.

Often, one injection does both.

Who it may help

An SI joint injection may help people who have:

- Pain on one or both sides of the low back, buttock or hip
- Pain that may spread to the groin or thigh
- Pain when sitting a long time, climbing stairs, getting up from a chair or standing on one leg
- Exam tests that point to the SI joint
- Pain that has not improved enough with physical therapy, a belt or medicines

What to expect

1. **Before:** we review your exam, imaging, allergies and medicines. Blood thinners may need to be paused, but only with approval from the doctor who prescribes them. Come with your usual level of pain if you can, so the test is clear.
2. **Getting ready:** you lie on your stomach. The skin is cleaned and numbed.
3. **Guidance:** your physician uses live X-ray (fluoroscopy), and sometimes ultrasound, to guide a thin needle into the joint. A small amount of contrast dye confirms the needle is in the right place.
4. **Medicine:** numbing medicine, often with a steroid, is injected. This usually takes a few minutes.
5. **After:** you rest briefly. We may ask you to move in ways that usually hurt, and to track your pain for the next several hours.

Recovery

- Most people go home the same day and return to light activity the next day.
- Keep a pain diary for the first 6 to 8 hours and over the next few weeks. This tells us how much of your pain came from the joint.
- The numbing medicine wears off within hours. If a steroid was used, it may take a few days to work.
- Soreness at the injection site for a day or two is common.

Is it right for me?

May be a good fit: people whose history and exam point to the SI joint and who have not improved enough with conservative care.

May not be a good fit: people with an active infection, a bleeding disorder or blood thinners that cannot be safely paused, an allergy to the medicines or contrast, poorly controlled diabetes, or pregnancy. If your pain clearly comes from another source, a different test or treatment may fit better.

Risks

Risks include soreness at the site, a short-term increase in pain, bleeding or bruising, and side effects of the steroid, such as a short rise in blood sugar. Infection is uncommon. Allergic reaction and nerve irritation are rare. Some people have temporary leg numbness or weakness from the numbing medicine, so plan to have a driver.

Questions people ask

How do I know my pain is from the SI joint? SI joint pain can look like other back or hip problems. Exam

tests and a diagnostic injection that numbs the joint are commonly used to help confirm it.

How long does an SI joint injection last? The numbing medicine lasts a few hours. If a steroid is used, relief may last weeks to months for some people, while others have little benefit.

Will it hurt? The skin is numbed first. Most people feel pressure and brief discomfort.

Why do I need to keep a pain diary? Your pain score in the hours after the injection helps us know whether the SI joint is the source. That guides next steps.

Insurance and cost

GSMC participates with all Aetna plans, including Aetna HMO, and many other plans. Coverage depends on your plan and may need prior authorization. Our team checks your benefits before treatment.

When to call us: fever or chills; redness, swelling or drainage where a needle or device was placed; new or worse pain, numbness or weakness. **Call 911** for chest pain, trouble breathing, or sudden loss of bladder or bowel control.

Call 732-202-3000

One number for all 7 GSMC offices:

Toms River · 1314 Hooper Ave, 1st Floor

Brick · 1608 NJ-88, Suite 102

Whiting · 1100 NJ-70, Entrance B

Barnegat · 249 S Main St, Suite 5

gsmedicalcenter.org/treatments/si-joint-injection/

Manahawkin · 1109 Beacon Ave

Freehold · 322 Professional View Dr, 300 Bldg, 2nd Fl

West Long Branch · 100 NJ-36, Suite 1K



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