

Facet Joint Syndrome

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Situation: Facet Joint Syndrome is a term used to describe a misalignment—also called a subluxation—of the facet joint of the spine. When a patient explains that his or her “back has gone out” and points to the lower back, it is often because of facet joint syndrome. The facet joints are lined with cartilage and a lubricating capsule surrounds the joint to allow free movement of the vertebrae. When severe misalignment of the spine occurs, the lubricating capsule can be pinched, resulting in severe pain.

Causes: Facet joint syndrome can be caused by day-to-day activities like bending, twisting, and lifting . . . or athletic activities. Moderate to severe pain from facet joint syndrome will be felt immediately, usually in the lower back.

Symptoms: Severe localized back pain, awkward posture, and muscle spasms are common. Pain is usually sharp, shooting and on one side of the spine. No radiating pain is felt into extremities.

Treatment: Treatment options can include chiropractic care, acupuncture, physical therapy, and massage therapy. The chiropractor will diagnose your condition and determine what type of treatments and modalities are appropriate for you.