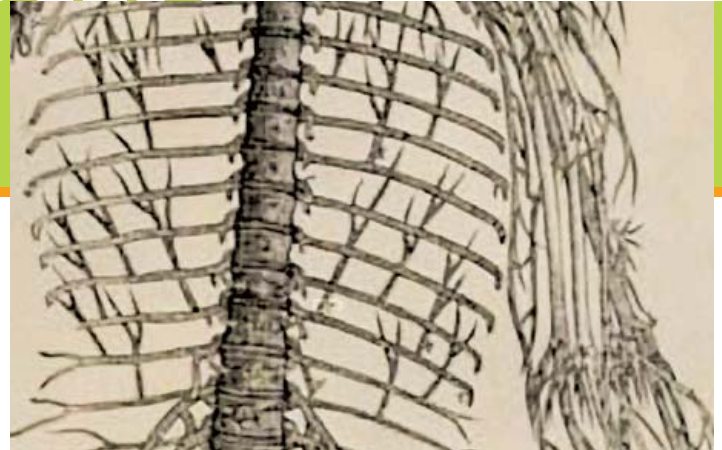


Pain Solutions

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Radiofrequency



What is radiofrequency lesioning?

Spine pain is the second most frequent pain complaint. It occurs in 65-80 percent of the population and can be disabling and frightening.

Radiofrequency lesioning of nerves is a safe procedure that may be used to reduce chronic pain by preventing transmission of pain signals. The radiofrequency current heats up a small section of nerve tissue to cause a long-lasting interruption in pain signals and reduce pain in that area. This procedure is sometimes called radiofrequency ablation. It is a non-surgical option for long lasting pain relief.

What should I know about this procedure?

Your physician will first identify the nerve or nerves that are sending the pain signals to your brain. The physician will locate the nerve by taking an x-ray of the area. A diagnostic nerve block is done to ensure that the more advanced procedure will be effective. The radiofrequency procedure is then performed by a physician in our 'state of the art' fluoroscopy suite. Local anesthesia will be used to reduce any discomfort during the procedure.

You will be awake and alert during both the sensory and motor stimulation process to aid in properly pinpointing placement of the lesioning electrode.

During the procedure, you will lie on either your stomach or back. After you receive the anesthesia, an instrument is placed under the skin through which electrical stimulation is given to heat the surrounding tissue. Under the guidance of the x-ray, your physician will then insert the needle to the exact target area. A microelectrode is then inserted through

the needle to begin the stimulation process. The heat numbs your nerves, blocking them from sending pain signals to your brain. During the process, you will be asked if you are able to feel any sensation. The purpose of the stimulation process is to help your doctor determine if the electrode is in the best area for treatment and pain relief. Once the location is verified, treatment is ready to begin. A small radiofrequency current will travel through the

electrode into the surrounding tissue, causing the tissue to heat and eliminate the pain pathways.

The amount of time the procedure takes varies based on how many nerves are being blocked.

What happens after the procedure?

Following the procedure you may experience some sensitive tissue at the needle placement site. The discomfort will subside within a few days. Regular consumption of liquids and food can usually resume soon after the procedure. This procedure can usually be done on an outpatient basis.

Radiofrequency treatments block pain signals for a prolonged period of time. However, the human body may regenerate the pain pathways. Therefore, it is not unusual that the procedure may need to be repeated, but most patients report longer lasting relief than with other spinal injections which are commonly done with local steroids. Results usually last between 3 and 9 months. The procedure may take up to a week to reach its maximum pain reducing effect.

Radiofrequency treatment will not limit your day-to-day activities. You should be able to resume your normal activities, including work, as soon as you feel able. However, any preexisting physical restrictions you have prior to the procedure may still remain.

Who should not have this procedure?

- People taking blood thinning medication (e.g. Coumadin®, Plavix®)
- Someone who has an active infection
- People who did not respond to local anesthetic blocks

