

RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING

What is Radio Frequency Lesioning?

Radio Frequency Lesioning is a procedure using a specialized machine to interrupt nerve conduction on a semi-permanent to permanent basis.

Am I a candidate for Radio Frequency Lesioning?

Radio Frequency Lesioning is offered to patients with mechanical low back pain secondary to facet joint disease. These patients have previously responded positively to local anesthetic blocks (Facet Injections). Radio Frequency Lesioning may also be offered in some cases of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD), Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), or Sympathetically Mediated Pain (SMP).

What is the purpose of this procedure?

The procedure disrupts nerve conduction (eg. sending pain signals), and it may in turn reduce pain, and other related symptoms.

How long does the procedure take?

Depending upon the areas to be treated, the procedure can take from 30-45 minutes.

How is the procedure performed?

The needle(s) is (are) placed under x-ray guidance and a local anesthetic like lidocaine is injected. After confirmation of the needle tip position, a special needle is inserted. The tissues surrounding the needle tip are heated when electronic current is passed using the Radio Frequency machine for a few seconds. This "burns" the nerves.

Will the procedure hurt?

The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and deeper tissues (like a "penicillin shot"). So, there is some discomfort involved. However, we numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle prior to inserting the special needle.

Who should not have this procedure?

If you have an active infection going on, you should not have the procedure. If you have not responded to local anesthetic blocks (Facet Injections), you may not be a candidate for this procedure.

Will I be "put out" for this procedure?

No. This procedure is done under local anesthesia.

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General Pre/Post Instructions

Patients may eat a light meal before the procedure. If a patient is an insulin dependent diabetic, they should take their insulin and eat. Patients may take their routine medications. (e.g. high blood pressure and oral diabetic medications). If you are on **Coumadin (Warfarin)**, **Plavix (Clopidogrel)**, **Lovenox, Pletal (Cilostazol)**, **Effient (Prasugrel)**, **Teclid (Ticlopidine)**, or **Pradaxa (Dabigatran)**, notify the office so that special instructions may be given. If you are allergic to iodine, contrast, or medical dye, please inform the office. Patients can expect to be at the facility approximately 1 1/2 hours. A driver must accompany the patient and be responsible for getting them home. No driving is allowed the day of the procedure. Patients may return to their normal activities the day after the procedure, including returning to work unless instructed otherwise by the physician.

How long will the effects of the procedure last?

The effects of the procedure can last from several days to several months.

How many procedures do I need to have?

If the first procedure does not relieve your symptoms completely, you *may* be recommended to have a repeat procedure after re-evaluation.

Will the Radio Frequency Lesioning help me?

It is very difficult to predict if the procedure will indeed help you or not. Generally speaking, the patients who have responded to local anesthetic blocks (Facet Injections) will have better results.

What are the risks and side effects?

Generally speaking, this procedure is safe. However, with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and possibility of complications. The risks and complications are dependent upon the sites that are lesioned. Please discuss your concerns with your physician.

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