



RADIOFREQUENCY HEATING FOR LOW BACK PAIN

Radiofrequency uses high-frequency waves to produce thermal coagulation of nerves (heat the nerves) by placing a needle probe through the skin (percutaneous). This appears to be a safe effective treatment for carefully selected patients. The history of radiofrequency energy dates from the early 1900's; during the 1950's radiofrequency was used for creating lesions within the central nervous system. Modern thermal-coupled electrodes are not only small but also quite accurate at measuring temperature and generating the radiofrequency lesion. Frequencies above 250 kilocycles alternating current (AC) are used and the tissue at the tip of the electrode is heated.

INDICATIONS

Chronic low back pain (for joint-mediated pain) with at least one previously successful anesthetic block (Facet Nerve Block)

RESULTS

Good to excellent

INJECTION PROCEDURE

Radiofrequency heating is an outpatient procedure.

PREPARATION FOR PROCEDURE

Provide a list of all medicines (You may be asked to stop some of them before the procedure)

CHECKING IN

You will be asked to fill out and sign some forms when you check in. These can include questions about your pain. You will receive an IV (intravenous) line to give you fluids and medicine.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

1. Spinal headache (rare)
2. Bleeding (rare)
3. Infection (rare)
4. Paralysis(extremely rare)

PROCEDURE FOR PATIENT

Informed consent.

Patient is prepped, draped and positioned on stomach.

Vitals Signs are monitored.

Local anesthesia is achieved with Lidocaine or similar drug.

X-ray fluoroscopy is used to confirm placement of probe.



Probe is heated for approx. 60 seconds at 80 degrees.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

Ice is applied to the site for 20 minutes hourly on day one and 3-4 times daily for days 2-4. Avoid heat for 7-10 days. Avoid showering for 24 hours and restrict physical activities to sedentary activity for the first 3-4 days.

WHEN YOU GET HOME

You don't need to stay in bed when you get home. In fact, it is best to walk around if you feel up to it. Just be careful of being too active. Even if you feel better right away, avoid activities that may strain your back. Keep in mind that some patients may feel increased pain at first. It usually goes away within a few days. An injection to reduce inflammation takes a day or two to work. An injection to help locate the source of pain may give only brief pain relief. Follow up treatment with your doctor. The following tips will help you recover:

1. Take walks when you feel up to it.
2. Rest if needed, but get up and move around after sitting for half an hour.
3. Do not exercise vigorously.
4. Return to work or other activities when your doctor says you are ready.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

Call right away if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Severe pain or headache
- Fever or chills
- Loss of bladder and bowel control
- Redness or swelling at the injection site

N.B.: Pain relief may deteriorate over 6-9 months in some patients and the procedure may need to be repeated.