



Radiofrequency Denervation

What is it?	Radiofrequency Denervation is a procedure that helps reduce pain in a specific area by using a heated probe to destroy a nerve or group of nerves. The procedure interrupts the pain signal to that specific area, disrupts nerve conduction for prolonged periods of time and may reduce pain. Since nerves have been known to regenerate and reestablish pain pathways, it may be necessary to repeat the procedure from time to time.
Why is it done?	The procedure is performed to relieve pain in the neck or back. Typically, the pain is centrally located and related to degeneration (deterioration) or arthritis, especially involving the facet joints (true joints of the spine). Normally, the radiofrequency denervation (lesioning) of the facet joints is done after a diagnostic procedure using local anesthetic (numbing medication) and a cortisone derivative (anti-inflammatory medication) has shown at least temporary relief of symptoms. If relief is obtained with the diagnostic blocks, then a more permanent radiofrequency procedure may be considered.
How is it done?	When you are in the procedure room, you will be asked to lie either face down (for upper or low back) or on your back (if the area is in the neck) on a cushioned x-ray table. A small needle is used to inject a local anesthetic (numbing medication) to numb the skin in the treatment area. Next, small needles will be placed in the side of the back or neck with the aid of a fluoroscope (x-ray machine) to ensure correct needle placement. A microelectrode (small instrument that conducts electric current) is then inserted through the needle. You will then be asked if you feel a tingling sensation, which indicates that the electrode has been placed in the correct position to obtain maximum pain relief. Once placement is determined to be correct, radiofrequency current is sent to the tip of the electrode, causing the area to heat up and eliminate the pain pathway. The needles are removed and small band aids are applied.
Is there any preparation?	You may receive conscious sedation. Conscious sedation is medication given through an intravenous (IV) catheter (tube) inserted in a vein in your arm prior to the procedure. The medication will help you relax, but it will not put you to sleep. If you opt to have conscious sedation, you MUST NOT EAT OR DRINK for 4 hours before your procedure. You may, however, take your medication with a small sip of water . Please be advised that the amount of sedation given will be minimal, since communication between the physician and patient during the procedure is important.
What to wear?	Please wear loose, comfortable clothing and leave all jewelry and other valuables at home.
How long does it take?	We ask that you arrive 30 - 45 minutes before the scheduled time of your procedure. The procedure lasts about 15 - 30 minutes. You will be in the recovery area about 15 minutes.
Risks	The risks of this procedure include , but are not limited to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pain in the area where the needle(s) was inserted. This can last for two to three days and can be treated by using ice and mild analgesics (pain medication) such as Motrin, Naprosyn or Tylenol. * Temporary numbness or weakness in one or both legs. This is normal. You should have assistance with walking and should not drive for 24 hours. * Bleeding in the injection area. * Infection in the injection area. * Increased pain * Nerve damage, paralysis, stroke and even death.