

Radiofrequency Ablation (aka rhizotomy/neurotomy) Discharge Instructions

Follow up:

_____ Please schedule a follow-up appointment with your Surgeon's office in _____ weeks.

Adam Michalik, DO 952-456-7777 Daytime Hours

_____ A follow up appointment is not required at this time. Please contact your Surgeon's office at the number above if you experience complications at home after this procedure.

Adam Michalik, DO 651-439-8807 Evening/Weekend Hours

If you have questions after reading this information, call the health care provider who ordered your injections.

ABOUT RADIOFREQUENCY NERVE ABLATION

Radiofrequency ablation is a procedure that uses electrical impulses to heat up — or “ablate” — a small area of nerve fibers. Radiofrequency nerve ablation is done to block or interrupt some of the nerves that carry pain signals from the treated area. The procedure is done to reduce your pain in that area.

The most common areas of treatment are the nerves near your:

- Neck, called the cervical facet joint area.
- Mid-back, called the thoracic facet joint area.
- Lower back, called the lumbar facet joint area.
- Buttocks, called the sacroiliac joint.
- Knee.
- Hip.

It can take four to six weeks before you notice the full, pain-relieving effect of radiofrequency nerve ablation. Pain relief usually lasts about 6 months to 2 years. How long pain relief lasts is different for everyone. The procedure is generally not repeated sooner than six months. A small number of people get little to no pain relief. There is no way to know before the procedure whether the procedure will work for you or how long the pain relief will last.

Radiofrequency nerve ablation usually is done as an outpatient procedure. This means you go home the same day. The procedure usually takes about one hour, but it may take longer depending on the number of areas being treated.

CARE FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURE

- You can resume your usual diet, medications, and physical activities, including those that usually cause pain.
- Continue to follow the medical plan you have talked about with your health care provider, such as medications, physical therapy or exercise, and any previous restrictions on your activity.

- You may shower whenever you want to, but do not go swimming or use a bathtub, hot tub or whirlpool for two days following radiofrequency ablation.

DO NOT

- Drive for the rest of the day.
- Use heating pads or any other form of heat on the injection site for 48 hours.

SIDE EFFECTS

Your skin where your provider injected the local anesthetic may be numb for several hours. You may have a bruise on the procedure area. The injection site may be sore for several days.

To relieve discomfort, you may apply ice to the area for 15 to 20 minutes and repeat every two to four hours as needed. You may take a non-aspirin pain reliever (Tylenol™/acetaminophen or Advil™/ibuprofen) in the recommended dose.

You may also have temporary weakness or numbness. If the treated area was near your neck, you may have some weakness or numbness in the neck, your upper arms, or both. If the treated area was in your lower back, buttocks hip or knee, you may have weakness or numbness in your lower back, your legs or both depending on the area treated.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Possible complications, which are rare, may include:

- Dizziness which is usually temporary.
- Infection at the injection sites.
- Nerve pain which may be in a new area of the body. Usually, this is temporary, but it could be permanent.
- Long-term weakness or paralysis. For neck procedures, the weakness or paralysis typically would be in the neck, upper extremities or both. For lower-back procedures, the weakness or paralysis typically would be in the back, lower extremities or both. This could be permanent.
- Loss of some function in your bowel, bladder or both. The loss typically would be temporary but could be permanent. (This is an extremely rare side effect.)

CAUTION

After your radiofrequency nerve ablation, you are at an increased risk of falling due to side effects of sedation. *For your safety, for the first 24 hours afterward, make sure someone is close by when you get up or move around. Take your time and hold onto railings or sturdy pieces of furniture when possible. Do not hesitate to ask others for help and support.*

Ask your health care provider for more information about the side effects of sedation.

FOLLOW UP

Call your provider if you have continued pain beyond three weeks or if you have any questions or concerns regarding the procedure.

WHEN TO SEEK EMERGENCY CARE

Seek emergency medical care if you have any of the following:

- Bleeding from the procedure area that does not stop after applying pressure for 10 minutes.
- Signs of infection which include:
 - A temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius or higher.
 - Injection site becomes red, swollen, tender or warm.
 - Fluid drains from the injection site.
 - Injection site has an odor.
- Signs of allergic reaction which include:
 - Rash.
 - Throat swelling.
 - Difficulty swallowing.
 - Wheezing or difficulty breathing.
 - Itching.
 - Nausea and vomiting.
 - Light-headedness.