

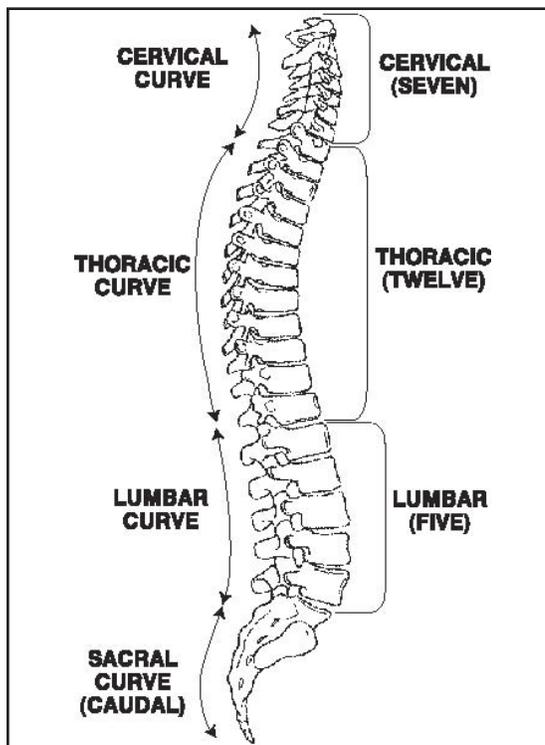
Radiofrequency Ablation

General Information

Radiofrequency ablation is a procedure that interrupts pain signals with radiofrequency current. The current creates heat, which scars the nerve tissue. This stops the pain signals from that area.

Ablation can provide pain relief for long periods of time.

Your results will vary depending on how fast your nerves grow back.



© Allina Health System

Your radiofrequency ablation will be in one of three areas of your spine: cervical, thoracic or lumbar.

Your Appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

With: _____

To cancel, please call the United Pain Center at 651-241-7246 at least 24 hours before your appointment.

Before the Procedure

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure because you may have some numbness that could make driving difficult.
- If you take blood thinner such as warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin, clopidogrel (Plavix®) or ticlopidine (Ticlid®):
 - Call the Patient Care Line at 651-241-7365 as soon as you schedule your appointment. You will receive special directions.
- Do not eat any solid food for 6 hours before the procedure.
- You may drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before the injection.
- Take your regular medicine(s) with a small sip of water.

(over)

During the Procedure

- A doctor will perform the radiofrequency ablation in the clinic. He or she will use fluoroscopy.
- You will lie on a table on your stomach or back.
- You will be given a local anesthetic (medicine) to numb the area so you will not feel the ablation.
- The doctor will talk with you while he finds the right spot for the electrodes.
- The doctor will check your sensation and muscle control in the area where nerves will be heated.
- You may be uncomfortable, for short periods. But, you should not feel any pain. If you feel pain, please tell the doctor right away.
- When the ablation begins, a small current will travel through the electrode into your tissue. The current will heat and scar the area. This is usually not felt.

After the Procedure

- You'll be in the clinic recovery room for a while as we watch and check for any adverse reaction.
- You may have numbness which could limit your ability to do things like lift weights, raise your hands above your head or operate machinery.
- The injection site might be sore for a few days. You should ice the site three times a day for 20 minutes until the soreness is gone.

It is best to avoid heavy exercise or sitting in one position for long periods of time after your procedure.

Your discharge instructions will tell you when you may resume normal activities. You can continue your stretching exercises as tolerable.

Follow-up Appointment

Before you leave the clinic, a nurse will review your discharge instruction sheet and plans for a follow-up appointment. To make an appointment, call 651-241-7246.

Side Effects From Ablation

Infection is a potential side effect. Please call the Patient Care Line at 651-241-7365 if you have any of these symptoms:

- unusual swelling
- pain that gets worse or headache that doesn't go away
- warmth and redness in the injection area
- nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
- fever.

Depending on where your injection is, there may be other complications. Your doctor will explain these to you before the injection.

Whom To Call With Questions

Call the Patient Care Line at 651-241-7365 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.