

Radiofrequency Ablation

Your doctor recommends that you receive radiofrequency ablation for pain control. Radiofrequency ablation uses heat to destroy the nerves. This procedure is used to treat chronic pain that comes from the facet joints. These joints, located between the bones in your back, can become inflamed and irritated causing intense pain.

If you are at an age where pregnancy is possible, you will have an appointment at MD Anderson to take a urine pregnancy test 7 days before the procedure.

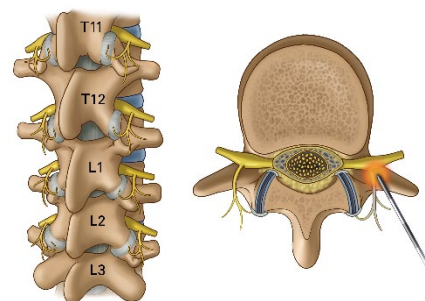


Day of Procedure

1. **Do not** eat or drink for at least 8 hours before the procedure.
2. Tell your doctor if you take any blood thinners such as aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix[®]), enoxaparin (Lovenox[®]) or warfarin (Coumadin[®]).
3. Tell your doctor if you have an infection or a fever.
4. You must have an adult with you to drive you home.

The Procedure

1. This procedure will be done at the clinic or in an operating room. When you arrive, the care team will take your vital signs.
2. An IV may be placed in a vein in your arm and you may receive a mild sedative to help you relax.
3. The care team will have you lay on your stomach and then clean the area with an antiseptic solution.
4. The doctor will use a fluoroscope, which is an X-ray, and insert a special needle that produces heat into the area causing pain. The heat burns the nerve ending to provide pain relief.
5. The needle is removed and the care team will take you to the recovery area.



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After the Procedure

You will stay in the recovery area so the care team can watch over you after the procedure. Once you meet the recovery criteria, they will give you instructions and send you home.

- **Do not** drive or use machinery for at least 24 hours after the procedure.
- **Do not** do any strenuous activity.
- You may return to your normal activity after a few days.

You may not get pain relief for 10 to 14 days after the procedure.

When to Seek Care

Call the Pain Management Center or go to the nearest hospital emergency center if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- New onset of numbness or weakness
- Cannot control your bladder or bowel
- Redness or swelling around the injection site

The MD Anderson Acute Cancer Care Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From Holcombe Boulevard, turn at Entrance Marker 3. The entrance is on Bates Street for patient drop off only. You can park in Garage 2.

Contact Information

Pain Management Center

713-792-6070

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have questions after business hours, weekends and holidays, call 713-792-2121 to speak to a nurse with askMDAnderson. In case of an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency center **right away**.