

MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCKS & RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION

ANATOMY OF THE FACET JOINTS

Facet joints are paired small joints that sit behind the spinal column at every spinal level. Each Facet joint is supplied by two medial nerves that carry signals (including pain signals) away from the spine to the brain. The facet joints support the spine and often take the brunt of the forces while bending and twisting activities.

MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCKS (MBB)

MBB are performed with X-ray guided injections of anesthetic to block these small nerves that supply the facet joints. If there is a significant improvement with 2 separate MBB procedures, then you may be eligible for RFA treatment for long-term pain relief. It is very important to document an accurate response to MBB to improve success with RFA treatment.

RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION (RFA)

RFA uses radio wave energy through the tiny tip of an insulated needle (a probe). The nerves treated with RFA transmit specific pain signals and not signals which control movement, balance or normal sensation. RFA cuts off pain signals produced by painful facet joints. Therefore, sensation, feeling and movement are unaffected by RFA treatment.

The correct amount of heat is used near the small nerves without destroying the nerve pathway. In time, these nerves will regenerate, but in the meantime, you will most likely have pain relief. Most patients experience around 6 months of improvement after RFA. Reports of relief of up to 2 years have been recorded.

SACROILIAC JOINT & KNEE JOINT (GENICULAR NERVE)

The sacroiliac joint (SIJ) and certain knee conditions have been successfully treated with RFA. A diagnostic nerve block is important to identify and determine if these nerves are the source of pain. With each respective area, small nerves that transmit pain signals are treated with RFA for longer term pain relief. Insurance coverage for these areas will require a prior-authorization from your specific plan.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.painprevent.com/radiofrequencyneurotomy-2/>.

RESPECTFULLY,

PAIN PREVENTION & REHABILITATION CENTER