

Genicular Radiofrequency Ablation

WHAT IS IT?

Genicular Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA), also known as Genicular Neurotomy, is a leading-edge option for treating knee pain without the need for surgery. It works by applying a specific type of radio wave to the sensory genicular nerves surrounding the knee.

HOW WILL IT HELP ME?

A genicular RFA is achieved by cauterizing the sensory nerves that transmit pain from the knee. This procedure can potentially provide relief for 6 months to a year. If the procedure provides the desired outcome for one knee, it can be performed on the other knee, if needed. It can also be repeated in six months if the nerves regenerate and cause pain.

The best candidates for a genicular nerve block are those who have chronic knee pain but are not a candidate for surgery, have degenerative joint disease, lingering pain after a total or partial knee replacement, or have severe osteoarthritis in the knees.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

It is important to perform two diagnostic tests before performing the genicular RFA. This testing process consists of two nerve block injections performed one to two weeks apart. The nerve block can relieve pain for hours, which provides the information to the physician that nerve ablation should provide similar results, but for much longer. If these are successful, the actual genicular radiofrequency ablation is scheduled.

The procedure is performed with the patient lying down. The injection site will be carefully cleaned, and a numbing agent (often bupivacaine) will be injected into the injection site. Using fluoroscopy or ultrasound, our doctors identify the genicular nerves to be targeted and inject a local anesthetic. Many patients feel immediate pain relief as the medications reach the nerves.

The procedure takes about 15 minutes; longer for those who choose to receive sedation.

HOW SOON WILL I FEEL RELIEF?

Some patients may feel mild discomfort in their knee from the procedure itself, which can be treated with anti-inflammatory medication, but their original source of pain typically decreases within the first hour.

