

# Radiofrequency Ablation

## WHAT IS IT?

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat pain in the spine. It is a safe and effective technique in which heat is used to disable the nerves in your spine that transfer pain signals to your brain. Although radiofrequency ablation is also used to treat other conditions, it is most commonly used to treat pain caused by arthritic joints in the spine.

## HOW WILL IT HELP ME?

RFA is a viable alternative to invasive surgery and extended use of pain medications. Your doctor may recommend this procedure if other treatment options have been unsuccessful in reducing your pain. Because RFA disables the nerves, the effects last longer than injections or blocks. If the nerves regenerate and become active again, they are likely to cause less pain than before.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Upon arrival, you will meet with one of the healthcare professionals to discuss your medical history and to ask any questions you may have about the procedure.

You may choose to receive IV sedation to help you relax. Once the area is sterilized, your doctor uses a specialized needle to apply heat directly to the nerves in your spine.

Following the procedure, you will likely have minimal effects. However, you may experience a temporary increase in pain (neuralgia) at the procedure site. This side effect usually resolves itself, but can be managed with rest, ice, and pain medication. Be sure to follow discharge instructions and contact your doctor if the pain continues or new symptoms arise.

## HOW SOON WILL I FEEL RELIEF?

You will likely experience significant pain relief within 4 weeks following the procedures. The effects may last for six to 24 months.

