Radiofrequency denervation

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET INT18

Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Please bring with you:

- Your request form
- Medicare and any
- Healthcare cards

Payment on the day of the examination is requested.

For more information regarding Benson Radiology please visit:

bensonradiology.com.au

What is Radiofrequency denervation?

Radiofrequency (RF) denervation, also known as radiofrequency ablation (RFA), is used to reduce pain by treating specific nerves that relay pain sensations to the brain.

A radiofrequency current is used to selectively heat the targeted nerve tissue and interrupt pain signals.

What symptoms can be treated with RF denervation?

RF denervation can be used to treat some types of chronic (long lasting) pain that have not responded to standard treatments.

Please note, RF denervation is not suitable for all types of pain. You will need to be assessed to ensure you are suitable for RF treatment.

What happens during the procedure?

Before we perform the RF denervation, we will first perform a test procedure to assess your suitability for RF treatment.

Test procedure (medial branch blocks)

For some spinal RF treatments, your doctor may first refer you for CT guided medial branch blocks to assess whether RF denervation may be suitable for you. Local anaesthetic is injected around the targeted nerves to see if your pain improves.

It is important to accurately assess whether your pain has improved after the test, as this helps determine whether RF treatment may be appropriate.

If you don't have a good response, your doctor may look for alternative causes of pain.

For a medial branch block, you will first complete a pain questionnaire. You will then be asked to change into a gown and be positioned on the CT table.

The treatment area will be sterilised and local anaesthetic will be injected around the targeted nerves using thin needles. This procedure takes about 15 minutes.

You can leave our department after 15 minutes with a carer to drive you home.

We will phone you two hours after the procedure to determine whether your pain symptoms have improved and by how much. This provides useful information to assess your suitability for RF treatment.

The radiofrequency treatment

For those patients assessed to be suitable for RF denervation, the process is similar to the test procedure, except the overall time on the CT table is approximately 30 minutes.

Local anaesthetic is used and the RF procedure is well tolerated. Each treatment site should not be overly sore or uncomfortable.

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Please turn

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Following the procedure

You will get changed into your normal clothes and then remain under observation in our department for approximately 30 minutes.

You should arrange for a carer to drive you home.

The RF treatment should not limit your daily activities. You will be able to return to a normal diet once you return home. Your doctor may suggest avoiding heavy exertion and lifting for several days.

Risk

RF is generally considered safe and effective. Most people tolerate the procedure very well, without complications.

There is a very small risk of bleeding and infection.

Post anaesthetic, some side effects may include slight discomfort in the area of the treatment and some minor swelling and bruising at the site of the injection.

How long does the treatment last?

The extent of pain relief may differ.

There is good clinical evidence for significant long lasting pain relief from facet joint pain (up to 6 to 12 months).

This represents significantly longer pain relief when compared to typical joint injections.

It is important to remember that RF treatment does not work for everybody. Your doctor will assess whether RF treatment is appropriate based on your symptoms and the area being treated.

RF treatments can be repeated as required if the pain returns. Further treatments can be discussed with your doctor.

It is important you understand why and how we will be assisting you. If you have any questions, please call one of our clinics or speak to our staff on the day of your visit.

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