Radiofrequency denervation

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET INT18 (SEDATION)

Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Duration of examination

Examination time will be approximately 60 minutes plus post-procedure care.

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.

Patient preparation

You will need to fast for six hours prior to the procedure.

Please inform us if you are taking any blood-thinning medication (i.e. Aspirin, Warfarin, Dabigatran or Clopidogrel) or if you have any allergies. You may need to have a blood clotting test before the procedure and have your medication adjusted by your doctor.

Please advise the radiographer if you are or think you may be pregnant.

Sedation

An anaesthetist will perform the twilight sedation. Please note this is not a general anaesthetic and you will still be awake during the procedure. The anaesthetist will use the appropriate amount of sedative and monitor you throughout the duration of the procedure.

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.

Please turn

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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.

Post examination care

Following the procedure you may feel some slight grogginess. You will be kept for observation until you are cleared by a nurse and feel comfortable to leave.

You are required to have someone with you to drive you home and stay with you overnight.

Please allow up to four hours for the procedure. Following the procedure.

After the Procedure

You may experience some soreness or bruising at the needle site and rarely, minor muscle spasm. You may also experience some temporary numbness at the injection site and in your affected limb. Occasionally referred pain can increase in the days after procedure.

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.

Are there any risks?

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

Complications such as infection, allergy, bleeding are considered to be very rare.

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 very important to remember that this treatment does not work for everybody with lower back pain. Your doctor will make a decision on whether you should be tested with a medial branch block based on your signs and symptoms.

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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