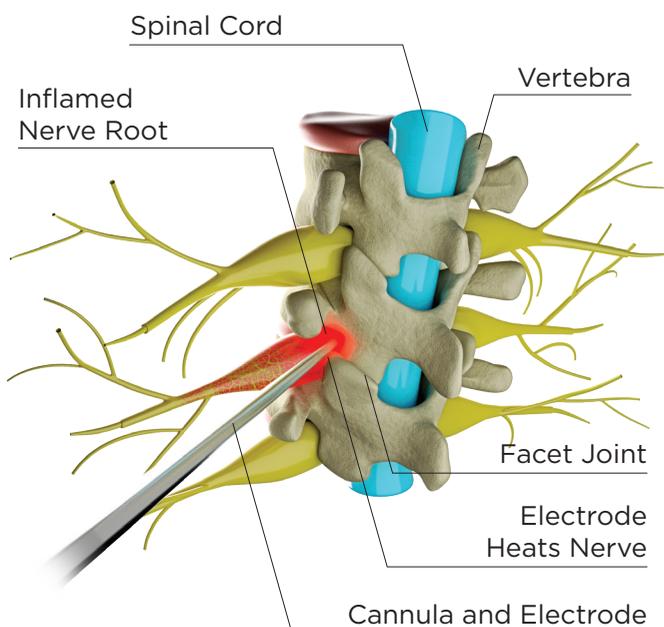


The Medial Branch Block and the RFA are two separate procedures.

We begin with the MBB, which is used as a diagnostic tool to establish if the source of your pain are the facet joints and the medial branch nerves. Facet joints are small bony projections from one vertebra which meet similar bony projections from the adjacent vertebrae. These joints are part of the bony framework of the spine which provide stability during movement.



What is Radiofrequency Ablation?

Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) is a procedure which uses electrical current produced by radio waves to create a heat lesion on the medial branch nerves. This interrupts the nerve's ability to transmit pain, providing you with pain relief. This is performed under anesthesia by inserting a small needle to the same place the MBB was performed. These locations are found using the fluoroscopic map created at your MBB visit. A microelectrode is then inserted through the needle down to the nerve. At this point the radiofrequency current is sent down the electrode sending heat to the medial branch nerve causing it to be ablated (removed with heat). RFA has been proven to be a safe and effective way to treat back pain.

The MBB is done by injecting an anesthetic medication around the medial branch nerves of specified facet joints using fluoroscopic (live X-ray) guidance. Typically multiple levels of the spine are injected at once. If you experience significant pain relief immediately following the MBB injection, we will have created a road map to the source of your pain and will then schedule you for the RFA. The MBB is a diagnostic injection, therefore it will only provide temporary pain relief, typically lasting about one hour. This injection is performed to predict the outcome of the second part of the 2-step process, Radiofrequency Ablation.

What can I expect after RFA?

Following the procedure, there is typically some slight discomfort including some swelling and bruising. A slight sunburned sensation is also common due to the nature of the procedure, however these symptoms all typically resolve within a few days. The degree of pain relief varies but in most cases we see significant relief lasting from 6 to 12 months.

Can I resume normal activities after the RFA procedure?

You have a few restrictions immediately following the procedure.

- Do not operate a vehicle or machinery for at least 24 hours after the procedure
- Do not engage in any strenuous activity for the first 24 hours after the procedure
- You may resume your normal diet

PRE & POST PROCEDURE MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK & RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION (RFA)



FOR THE MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK (MBB) INJECTION

- A driver is recommended for your MBB appointment.
- **Please do not take any pain medications (this includes muscle relaxants) the day of your MBB appointment. This will allow us to accurately rate the success of the procedure.** All other medications can be taken normally.
- Please remember the MBB will only provide temporary pain relief, typically around one hour.

FOR THE RADIOFREQUENCY ABLATION (RFA) PROCEDURE

- On the day of your RFA, a responsible adult must accompany you in order to ensure safe transportation home.
- You will receive a phone call the day after your RFA by one of our nursing staff to assess your well being
- Diabetic patients, please monitor blood sugar levels after your injection. Stress and medication can sometimes elevate your sugar level.
- Rest is recommended immediately following the procedure. You may return to light activities after 24 hours.