

## About Your Radiofrequency Ablation

### Why a radiofrequency ablation?

This procedure is done for persons who felt pain relief from a diagnostic facet block. A special electrode is used to heat the nerves of the facet joint, blocking the pain from being sent through those nerves.

A radiofrequency ablation is not a cure for the problem that is causing your pain, but is a method of long-term pain management. It will be done as an outpatient procedure.

Before the procedure, please tell your doctor if you:

- **Have any allergies or take any blood thinning medication.**
- **Have a pacemaker or a defibrillator.**

### What happens during the procedure?

- You will lie face down on an X-ray table. The skin over the area to be treated will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and draped with sterile towels.
- The area will be numbed with local anesthetic. The doctor will use X-rays to guide the placement of thin needles to the nerves of the painful facet joints. Low dose electrical stimulation will be done to ensure that the needles are close to the site of the nerves that need to be blocked.
- After ensuring that the needle placement is correct, the radiofrequency ablation of the nerves will be done.
- The procedure takes about 30 to 90 minutes. You will then be taken to a recovery area. The nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse, and review discharge instructions.

### Home care instructions

- You may remove the bandages after several hours.
- Rest as much as you need to. Go back to your normal activities as tolerated.
- Expect some bruising and soreness around the procedure site for about 5 to 7 days.
- It is very important to know that at first you may feel a warm sensation in the affected area. This is normal after the procedure, and it may last for several months. Please keep this in mind when planning your activities after the procedure.
- Most patients have a significant decrease in their pain around three weeks after the procedure. Pain relief can last from three months to two years or longer. If the original pain returns, the procedure can be repeated.

### Call us if:

- You have abnormal bleeding, persistent chills or a fever over 100° F.
- The site appears red, swollen and warm to the touch, or has any kind of drainage.

**If you stopped taking your blood thinning medicine, check with your doctor about taking this again.**

**In case of emergency, call your doctor. If you cannot reach a doctor, go to the nearest Emergency Room and ask them to call your doctor.**