



This material is provided as general information only, and is not to be considered as medical advice or as a consultation.

Please discuss this procedure with your doctor.

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RHIZOTOMY



RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING

More information on how this procedure may help you.

WHAT IS A RHIZOTOMY

This procedure uses a machine (*Radio frequency generator*) to generate a current to interrupt the pain signal transmission from the nerves to the brain.

The radio frequency current alters/heats the tissue in and around a terminal branch of the nerve. This diminishes the transmission of painful sensations along the nerve, on a semi-permanent basis.

Radio frequency is a successful method for lesioning nervous tissue.

This procedure is called a Rhizotomy.

WHO ARE CANDIDATES FOR THE PROCEDURE ?

Patients with ongoing chronic neck, back, knee, shoulder and jaw pain who have not responded well to any other therapeutic measures. It is also effective with patients suffering from failed back surgery syndrome.

Your doctor will decide whether this procedure is right for you or a diagnostic block may be performed to assess your suitability for this procedure.

IS THE PROCEDURE PAINFUL ?

The procedure involves inserting needles through the skin, layers of muscles and soft tissues, so there may be slight discomfort involved post-operatively.

The anaesthetist present will ensure this is minimised at all times whilst in theatre.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE PROCEDURE ?

The procedure will take place in an X-ray room or in an operating theatre under either conscious sedation or general anaesthetic. It is generally done with the patient lying on the stomach.

The doctor will then carefully insert special cannulas (needles) at the appropriate level (area) of your pain. A radiofrequency probe is then inserted through the cannula. The doctor will then stimulate the nerve gently to ensure it is correctly placed.

A radiofrequency current is then passed through the probe to disrupt the specific nerve that is responsible for your pain.

Several sites / levels may be treated at the same time to achieve optimal results.

This procedure should take approximately ½ -1 hours in theatre.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS ?

As with any spinal procedure there are risks, side-effects & the possibility of complications, dependant on the site(s) that are lesioned. Generally, this procedure is considered a safe and conservative treatment.

Please discuss any concerns you may have with your doctor.

THE RESULTS ?

This procedure can achieve 60% - 90% pain relief in the majority of patients for a period of up to 24 months.

Because this is a conservative treatment.

The results are not permanent and may be repeated if the pain returns.

Successful Rhizotomy procedures will last longer than steroid block injections and will most certainly reduce pain and its effects allowing you more physical freedom to get on with your life.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE ?

As the procedure is minimally invasive, most patients are ready to go home 1-2 hours after the procedure. Initially there will be muscle & tissue soreness for a few days and then you can expect to feel a reduction in your pain.

This pain can be treated with mild pain killers, speak to your doctor.

You should be able to return to work within the next couple of days.

You may feel groggy after the procedure, so it is advisable to have someone drive you home from the hospital.