



Minimally Invasive
Procedure Specialists

Genicular Radiofrequency Ablation/Rhizotomy

A genicular radiofrequency ablation (RFA); often called a rhizotomy, is a procedure to cauterize (burn) a specific nerve. When these nerves are ablated (or cauterized), pain from the knee can no longer be transmitted to the brain. A genicular RFA is performed to alleviate pain due to arthritic or damaged knees, and this treatment typically works for 8-12 months. Pain recurs as those nerves regenerate.

During the procedure, the site is sterilized with either iodine or chlorhexidine. The site to be injected is numbed with a local anesthetic. Fluoroscopy (live X-ray) is used to ensure proper placement and positioning of the needle. Once the needle is properly positioned, a test is performed to ensure that the needle tip is close to the appropriate nerve, and that it is close enough to ensure a successful ablation. Radiofrequency waves are then transmitted to the tip of the needle, which causes it to reach a temperature of 80 degrees Celsius. The needle tip is heated to this level for sixty seconds in order to complete the ablation process. This process is repeated for each targeted nerve.

AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE:

The healing process takes from two to four weeks. As your nerve(s) heal from the procedure, the pain will continue to improve. The maximum benefit is typically experienced about two weeks afterwards. Pain relief typically lasts 8-12 months.

Activity

- Do not overexert yourself the first day. No strenuous activity for 24 hours.
- You may return to work the day following your procedure.
- Resume your normal diet immediately.
- Do not take a bath, swim, or use a hot tub for 24 hours (you may take a shower).

Information on sedation

You may have received a combination of medications to relax you during your procedure. These will be acting in your body for at least the next 24 hours, so you might feel sleepy and may forget things. This feeling will slowly wear off. Because the drugs are still in the body, for the next 24 hours, you:

- SHOULD NOT- Drive a car
- SHOULD NOT- Use machinery or power tools
- SHOULD NOT- Drink any alcoholic beverages (not even beer or wine)
- SHOULD NOT- Take any drugs unless okayed by your doctor
- SHOULD NOT- Decide anything that is important (such as sign papers)
- SHOULD NOT- Smoke unless someone is near to watch you closely
- SHOULD NOT- Use a hot tub

When to Call Your Doctor

- Severe or progressive pain at the injection site(s)
- Arm or leg weakness that progressively worsens or persists for longer than 8 hours
- Severe or progressive redness, swelling, or discharge from the injections site(s)
- Fevers, chills, nausea, or vomiting
- Bowel or bladder dysfunction (i.e. inability to urinate or pass stool or difficulty controlling either)

If you have questions, contact the Radiology Care Unit at **(303) 738-2734** Monday through Friday from 7:00AM-5:00PM. For urgent matters after hours, call the Radiology Department at **(720) 528-0775** and ask for the MIPS Interventional Radiologist on call.