

If you are taking Coumadin or Plavix (or related products) you should have stopped it 7 days prior to this procedure.



Radio Frequency Lesioning

WHAT IS A RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING (RFL)? Radio Frequency Lesioning is a procedure using a specialized machine to interrupt nerve conduction on a semi-permanent basis. The nerves can be usually blocked for 6-9 months (can be as short as 3 months or as long as 18 months)

AM I A CANDIDATE FOR RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING? You must have responded well to local anesthetic blocks (Facet MBB), to be a candidate for RFL

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING? The procedure disrupts nerve conduction (such as conduction of pain signals), and it may in turn reduce pain, and other related symptoms. Approximately 70-80% of patients will get good block of the intended nerve. This should help relieve that part of the pain that the blocked nerve controls. Sometimes after a nerve is blocked, it becomes clear that there is pain from the other areas as well.

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCEDURE TAKE? Depending upon the areas to be treated, the procedure can take from about twenty minutes to over an hour.

WHERE IS THE PROCEDURE

PERFORMED? It will be done at our clinic at the Outpatient Procedure Fluoroscopy (x-ray camera) room.

HOW IS IT ACTUALLY PERFORMED?

Since these tiny pain nerves cannot be seen on x-ray, the needles are positioned using bony landmarks that indicate where the nerves usually are. Fluoroscopy (x-ray) is used to identify those bony landmarks. A local anesthetic (like Novocaine) is injected to minimize the discomfort. After confirmation of the needle tip position, a special needle tip is inserted. When the needle is in good position, as confirmed by x-ray, electrical stimulation is done before any lesioning. This stimulation may produce a buzzing or tingling or pressure sensation or may be like hitting your "funny bone". You may also feel your muscles jump. You need to be awake during this part of the procedure so you can report what you're feeling, often you may report pain in the area that you suffer. The tissues surrounding the needle tip are then heated when electronic current is passed using the Radio Frequency machine, for a few seconds. This "numbs" the nerves semi-permanently.

WILL THE PROCEDURE HURT? Nerves are protected by layers of muscle and soft tissues. The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and those layers of muscle and soft tissues, so there is some discomfort involved. However, we numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle prior to inserting the needle. There is moderate discomfort involved for a few weeks after. You may have numb areas with increased sensitivity (like a deep sun-burn).

WILL I BE "PUT OUT" FOR THIS PROCEDURE? No. This procedure is done under local anesthesia. Most patients receive intravenous sedation and analgesia, which makes the procedure easier to tolerate. It is necessary for you to be awake enough to communicate easily during the procedure.

HOW IS THE PROCEDURE

PERFORMED? It is done with either the patient lying on the stomach for low back pain, or on the side for neck pain. The patients are monitored with blood pressure cuff, and blood oxygen-monitoring device. The skin on the back is cleaned with antiseptic solution and then the procedure is carried out. X-ray (fluoroscopy) is used to guide the needles.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER THE PROCEDURE AND WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS? Initially there will be muscle soreness for up to a week after the procedure. Ice packs will usually control this discomfort. After the first two weeks are over, your pain may be gone or quite less. Some patients may have some "deep sun-burn" type feeling. Some may develop hypersensitivity or burning pain or numb areas for a few weeks. The relief of pain is noticed in about 2 to 3 weeks, not right away.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE PROCEDURE? You should have a ride home. We advise the patients to take it easy for a day or so after the procedure. You may want to apply ice to the affected area. Perform the activities as tolerated by you.

CAN I GO TO WORK TO WORK THE NEXT DAY? You should be able to return to

If you are taking Coumadin or Plavix (or related products) you should have stopped it 7 days prior to this procedure.

your work the next day. Sometimes soreness at the injection site causes you to be off work for a day or two.

HOW LONG WILL THE EFFECTS OF THE PROCEDURE LAST? If successful, the effects of the procedure can last from 3-18 months, usually 6-9 months.

HOW MANY PROCEDURES DO I NEED TO HAVE? If the first procedure does not relieve your symptoms completely, you *may* be recommended to have a repeat procedure after re-evaluation. Because these are not permanent procedures, they may need to be repeated when the numbness wears off (often 6-12 months).

WILL THE RADIO FREQUENCY LESIONING HELP ME? It is very difficult to predict if the procedure will indeed help you or not. Generally speaking, the patients who have responded to repeated local anesthetic blocks will have better results.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? The risks although infrequent, include: Allergic reaction to the medications used; Bruising or infection at the injection site; damage to nerves or blood vessels near the lesioned nerve.

WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE THIS PROCEDURE? If you are allergic to any of the injected medication or an active infection going on, you should not have the procedure. If you have not responded to local anesthetic blocks, you may not be a candidate for this procedure.

CERTAIN MEDICATIONS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF COMPLICATIONS.

* If you are on Coumadin (warfarin), Heparin, Aggrenox, Lovenox (enoxoparin), Ticlid (ticlopidine), Plavix (clopidogrel), Pradaxa (dabigatran), Eliquis (apixaban), Xaralto (rivaroxaban) OR Other BLOOD THINNING products you will need to get a medical clearance allowing you to stop your medication from your primary physician or cardiologist, prior to your scheduled procedure. **DO NOT STOP TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS UNTIL WE CALL AND NOTIFY YOU THAT YOU HAVE A MEDICAL CLEARANCE.** You can continue to use Celebrex and your pain medicines before the procedure. You should continue to **TAKE YOUR ROUTINE MEDICATIONS** (high blood pressure and diabetes medications) before the procedure. If you are on antibiotics please notify us, he may wait to do the procedure. You can resume taking these the next day after the procedure.

REMEMBER:

- **This and all Procedures are performed at New York Advanced Surgical Intervention Care – 2008 Eastchester Road, 2nd level Suite B, Bronx NY 10461**
- **Please DO NOT stop taking your blood pressure, diabetic, insulin, or cardiac medicines.**
- **Have adult drive or take personalized taxi service to return to your home.**
- **Wear loose, comfortable 2 piece clothing.**
- **Please do not bring any valuables with you day of procedure as you undergo anesthesia**

- **Stop taking Coumadin or Plavix (related products) 7 days prior to the scheduled procedure.**
- **Bring any requested MRI, CT, X-ray images on the day of the procedure.**
- **If you are pregnant or possibility that you may be pregnant, let the physician know immediately, as the X-ray camera cannot be used.**
- **When you check in you will need to sign consent forms, advise the medical staff of any allergies, especially to shellfish, iodine, contrast dyes or Latex.**
- **IV sedation; No FOOD for 8 HOURS before the procedure. Clear fluids (Water, Apple Juice) are OK 4-6 hours before the procedure. If you are Diabetic and have taken your medicines, please make sure you drink Apple Juice 4-6 hours before your procedure.**

N Y Spine & Sport Rehabilitation Medicine
*1250 Waters Place, Hutchinson Center, Suite 710
2008 Eastchester Road 2nd level Suite A, Bronx
New York Advanced Surgical Intervention Care
2008 Eastchester Road 2nd level Suite B, Bronx,
NY 10461*

Office: 718.794.0600/ 718.684.5727

Fax: 718.794.9899

SIREEN GOPAL, M.D.

*Clinical Assistant Professor
Albert Einstein College of Medicine*

Board Certified in:

*Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R),
Pain Management (PM&R/ Anesthesiology),
Pain Medicine & Electrodiagnostic Medicine*

Visit www.nyspineandsport.com our website for more updates and information!