
**THE CENTER FOR PAIN MEDICINE
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL**

RADIOFREQUENCY TREATMENT

Instruction Sheet for Patients

Should I limit my activity or change my diet after the procedure? No. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you may return to your usual activities and resume your normal diet immediately after the injection.

Are there any side effects caused by radiofrequency lesioning?

- You may experience a temporary increase in your pain similar in character to your usual pain that may last several days to 2 weeks.
- You may experience pain to light touch in the area of the injection (i.e., sunburn feeling) which usually subsides over several weeks. Applying an ice pack to the site for 15 minutes, 3 to 4 times a day will help
- You may develop areas around the injection site which feel “numb”. This may last for a few weeks
- Immediately after the injection, you may feel that your pain is gone or is quite less. This may be due to the local anesthetic and usually will only last a few hours.

Are there any restrictions after radiofrequency lesioning? Yes. You should follow these restrictions:

- Do not drive for the remainder of the day
- Do not take a tub bath or soak in water (i.e. pool, hot tub) for 24 hours after the procedure
- Allow 3 days post-procedure before resuming physical therapy

What are the medications used for radiofrequency lesioning? Radiofrequency lesioning are done with a mixture of different medications given for specific reasons. The most common medications used are:

- Lidocaine or bupivacaine are local anesthetics which are used to numb the area of injection; this numbness usually wears off within 2 - 6 hours.
- Triamcinolone (Kenalog) is a steroid which is used to treat inflammation and pain. The effects of this steroid may take up to 10 days to appear.

When should I call my doctor? You should call us immediately if any of the following occur:

- If you experience any swelling, redness, bleeding or discharge from the site of the injection

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- If you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- If you experience new or worsening back or neck pain
- If you experience a new numbness or weakness in your arms or legs
- If you have new difficulty with urination after the injection, like difficulty urinating or suddenly losing control of your bladder
- If you have new difficulty with your bowel movements after the injection, like suddenly losing control of your bowels
- If you develop a new headache after the procedure

How can I reach a doctor from the Center? There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week who can be reached as follows:

- **DURING OFFICE HOURS** (Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm), please call (617) 726-8810 and leave a message for the physician on the nurses' line
- **AFTER HOURS AND ON WEEKENDS**, please call (617-726-2000) and ask the hospital operator to page the physician on call for the MGH Pain Service
- **IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH A PHYSICIAN FROM OUR CENTER** and you are having any of the problems listed above, please go to the nearest Emergency Room and show them this document