

How do I care for myself at home?

Needle site care

Remove the bandage on the needle site the day after your procedure.

You can shower. **Do not** take a bath, go swimming, or use hot tub for next 48 hours.

Activity at home

You can return to your daily activities the next day. This includes returning to work.

When to get help

Contact your doctor or specialist if you have any of the following:

- fever above 38.5°C (101°F)
- flu-like symptoms, such as fever, aches, and chills
- increased pain or redness at the treatment site
- new leg pain, weakness, or numbness
- weakness or dizziness

HealthLinkBC

8-1-1

Call any time you have any questions or concerns. HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours. Available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

Locations

Lions Gate Hospital 604-984-5775
Medical Imaging, Lower Level
231 East 15th Street, North Vancouver

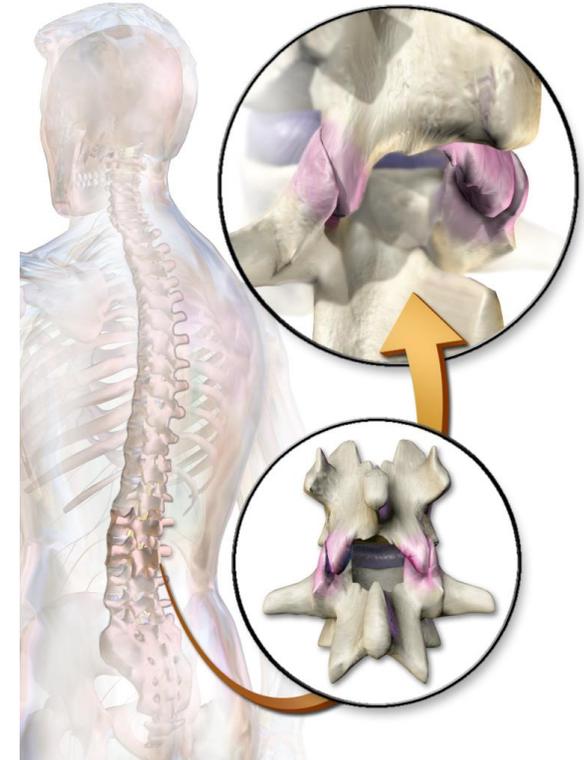
Royal Columbian Hospital 604-520-4640
Medical Imaging, Columbia Tower
330 E. Columbia Street, New Westminister

St. Paul's Hospital 604-806-8006
Medical Imaging, 2nd Floor, Providence Building
1081 Burrard Street, Vancouver

Vancouver General Hospital 604-875-4111
Interventional Radiology, Jim Pattison Pavilion Ext 68612
Station 4, Ground Floor, 855 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver



Facet Rhizotomy



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Facet Joints of the Spine

www.fraserhealth.ca – www.vch.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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What is a Facet Rhizotomy?

The facet is the joint on the side of each vertebra. A rhizotomy (say *rye-zot-oh-mee*) is a procedure to cut or sever the nerve root at certain facets.

The procedure uses high-frequency radio waves to create a heat that destroys the nerve. We call this radiofrequency ablation (say *ah-blai-shun*). The heat passes through a needle probe directed at the nerve root. Destroying the nerve root prevents pain signals from reaching the brain.

Who does this procedure?

An interventional radiologist or neuro-radiologist does the procedure (a doctor who specializes in image-guided procedures using fluoroscopy).

If you have questions about the procedure, you can ask the radiologist before your procedure.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, a relative or friend can stay with you before and after the procedure. However, for safety reasons, they cannot be in the room with you during the procedure.

You must arrange for a responsible adult to drive/escort you home after this procedure.

How long will it take?

Plan to be at the hospital for at least 2 hours. The procedure takes about 1 hour.

What happens before the procedure?

Our Medical Imaging Department contacts you with specific instructions on how to prepare for this procedure.

Before beginning the procedure, we start an intravenous so we can give you some medicine to help you relax if you need it. We might also give you acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or lorazepam (Ativan). You will be awake during the procedure because we need you to tell us what you are feeling as we treat the area.

What happens during the procedure?

You lie face down on the x-ray table.

The radiologist:

- Locates the spot where the injection will go.
- Cleans the area with antiseptic.
- Injects numbing medicine to freeze the skin around the area (similar to dental freezing).
- Guides the needle probe to the area being treated using x-ray images.
 - * You might need several levels of nerves treated during the procedure. It is important to lie as still as possible. Tell us if you have any pain.
- Places a small bandage over the area(s) when the procedure is complete.

Will it hurt?

It might sting or burn as the radiologist injects the numbing medicine into your skin.

If you have pain or discomfort during the procedure that is similar to the pain you normally experience, it tells us this is the nerve causing your pain.

The skin freezing usually wears off in the first 24 hours.

Your back will be sore for a few days.

What happens after the procedure?

We move you to the recovery area where we monitor you for about 1 hour.

We check your muscle function and sensation before you leave.

How will this change my pain?

You should feel some relief from the pain over the next few weeks.

Are there any risks or complication?

Any time the skin is pierced or cut, there is a chance of infection.

Other possible complications include:

- bleeding and bruising around the needle site
- increase or worsening of pain caused by muscle spasms
- leg weakness or numbness