

## How will this change my pain?

The skin freezing usually wears off in the first few hours. If the blocks work to ease pain, the effect can last a few hours to a few days.

Your back might feel sore for a few days in the area around the needle site.

## How do I take care of myself at home?

### Needle site care

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

You can shower after you have removed the bandage.

### Activity at home

You might want to rest today. You can return to your daily activities, including going to work, the next day.

## When to get help

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

- fever above 38.5°C (101°F), aches, chills
- any local pain, swelling, and/or redness around the needle site

## Locations

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

**Surrey Memorial Hospital** 604-588-3308  
Medical Imaging, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Lower Level  
13750 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Surrey

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

## 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.

[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca) ♦ [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)

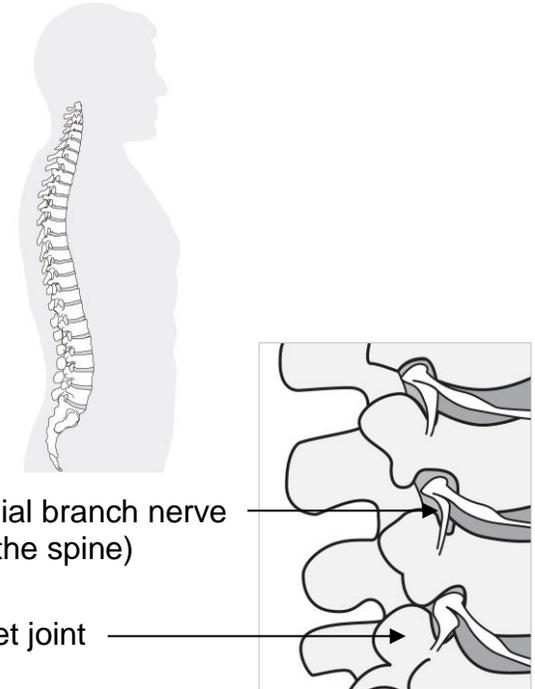
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# Medial Branch Block

## Medical Imaging



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## What is a Medial Branch Block?

Medial branch nerves are small nerves connected to facet joints in the spine. The nerves carry pain signals from the joint to the brain.

The procedure involves injecting a small amount of an anesthetic (similar to dental freezing) near a medial branch nerve to block the pain messages. Usually, medial nerves above and below the area of pain are injected in one procedure.

This procedure is usually done to see if blocking the pain signals of specific medial nerves relieves a person's pain. If it does, then the person could be considered for a procedure to cut the nerve completely (called a rhizotomy – say *r-eye-zot-oh-me*)

## Who does the procedure?

An interventional radiologist does the procedure (a doctor who specializes in image-guided procedures using CT scanning, fluoroscopy, and ultrasound).

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

## Can I bring a relative/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 or escort you home after this procedure.**

## What do I need to do to prepare for this?

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

## 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.
- Guides the needle as close as possible to the nerve causing pain using x-ray images. It is important to lie as still as possible. Tell us if you have any pain.
- Injects anesthetic into the area around the nerve.
- Places a small bandage over the area when the procedure is complete.

## Will it hurt?

It might sting or burn as the numbing medicine is injected into your skin. Once the skin is numb, you might feel a bit of pressure as the injection is done. If you have pain or discomfort that is similar to the pain you normally experience, it tells us this is the nerve causing your pain. As the anesthetic around the nerve takes effect, you should start to feel some relief from your pain.

## How long will it take?

The procedure takes about 30 to 60 minutes.

## What happens after the procedure?

We move you to a recovery area to rest for 30 minutes. We check your muscle function and sensation before you leave.

## Are there any risks or complications?

You could have some bruising and soreness around where the needle when through your skin.

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

Because we are injecting close to nerves, there is a small chance that a nerve could be accidentally damaged.