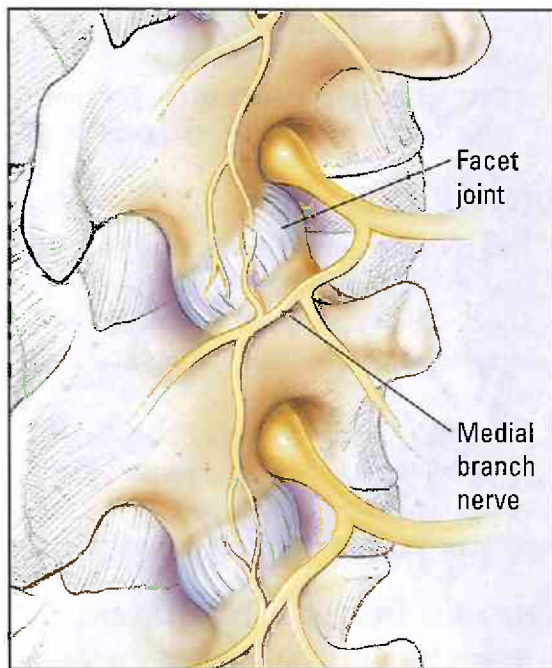


Medial Branch Nerves

Each vertebra in your spine has **facets** (flat surfaces). They touch where the vertebrae fit together. This forms a **facet joint**. Each facet joint has at least two **medial branch nerves**. They are part of the nerve pathway to and from each facet joint. A facet joint in your back or neck can become **inflamed** (swollen and irritated). Pain messages may then travel along the nerve pathway from the facet joint to your brain.



Blocking Pain Messages

Medial branch nerves in each facet joint send and carry messages about back or neck pain. Destroying a few of these nerves can keep certain pain messages from reaching the brain. This can help bring you relief. (Note that medial branches don't control muscles or sensation in the arms or legs.)

Discussing Your Results

Relief from pain can help you enjoy your life again. Let your doctor know if you still have pain after your treatment. The treated nerves most often regrow within 6 months to a year. At that time, you may need repeat treatment.

Special Instructions:

Consultants:

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This brochure is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care.

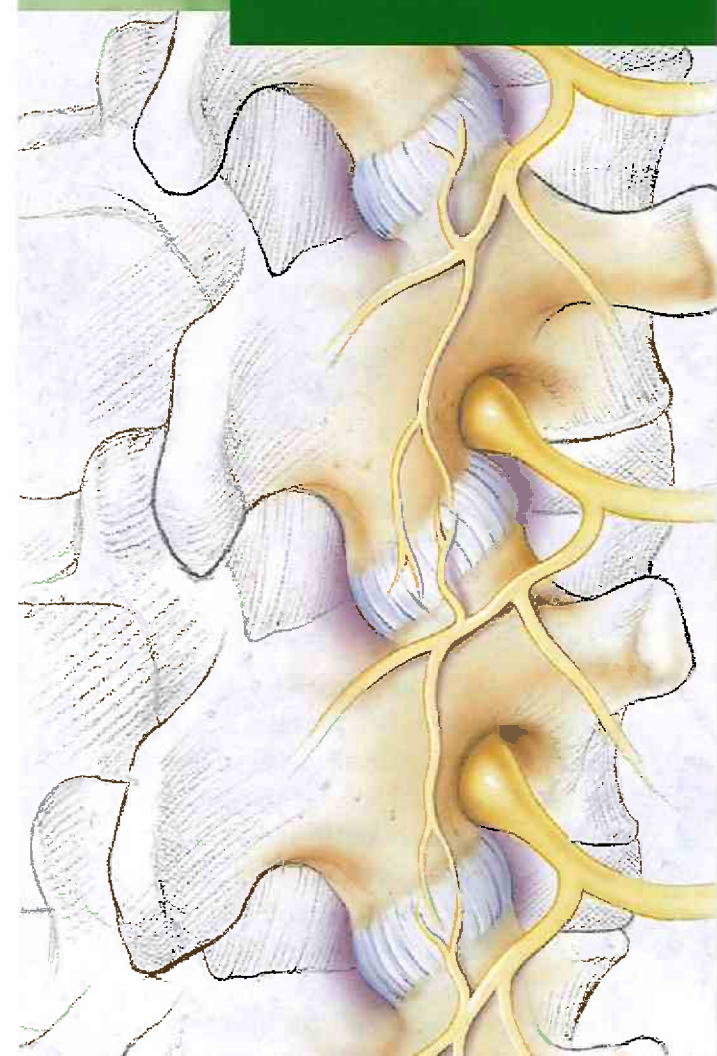
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Medial Branch Neurotomy



Treating Your Pain

Back or neck pain may be due to problems with certain nerves near your spine. If so, a **medial branch neurotomy** can help relieve your pain. The treatment uses heat, cold, or chemicals to destroy the nerves near a problem spinal joint. This keeps some pain messages from traveling to the brain and helps relieve your symptoms.



Pain messages may travel along medial branch nerves from problem spinal joints to your brain.

Getting Ready

- At least a week before treatment, tell your doctor what medications you take, including over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies, and supplements. Ask whether you should stop taking any of them before treatment.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant. Also mention allergies to any medications.
- Stop eating or drinking as directed before your treatment, often 8 hours.
- If asked, bring x-rays, MRIs, or other tests

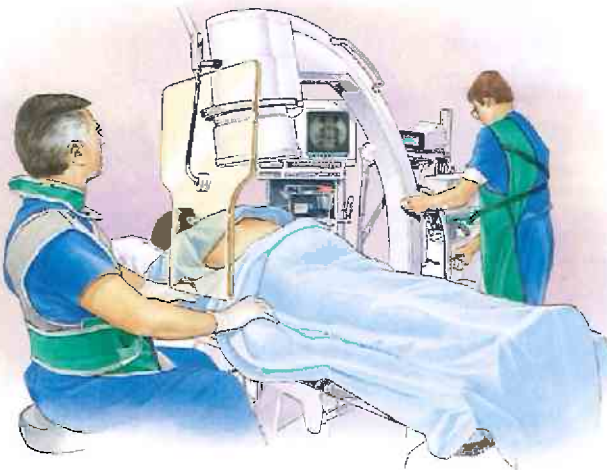
Your Treatment Experience

The treatment is done in a hospital or surgery center. You'll be asked to fill out some forms, including a consent form. You may also be examined. You may be given an **IV (intravenous) line** for fluids and medications.

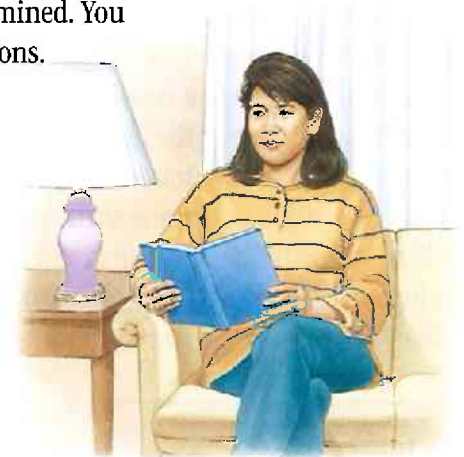
During the Procedure

To help you relax, medication may be given through the IV line. You will lie on an exam table on your stomach, back, or side depending on where the problem joint is. During your treatment:

- The skin over the treatment site is cleaned and then numbed with medication.
- **Fluoroscopy** (x-ray imaging) is used to help your doctor see the spine and guide the treatment. Contrast fluid may be injected into the affected region. This helps structures and tissues show up clearly on x-rays.
- Heat, cold, or chemicals are used to destroy part of the nerve near the inflamed facet joint. Other nerves nearby may also be treated.



Fluoroscopy helps guide treatment.



Relax at home for the rest of the day after your treatment, even if you feel good.

After the Procedure

- Most often, you can go home in about an hour. Have an adult family member or friend drive you.
- The treated spot may be swollen and feel more sore than usual. This is normal and may last for a day or so.
- It may be a few days before you get relief from your symptoms. You may be prescribed pain medications to take during this time.
- Ask your doctor when you can go back to work.

Call Your Doctor if You Have:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or chills
- Warmth, redness, swelling, drainage, or bleeding at the treatment site

Risks and Complications Include:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Increased pain, numbness, or weakness
- Nerve damage
- Failure to relieve pain