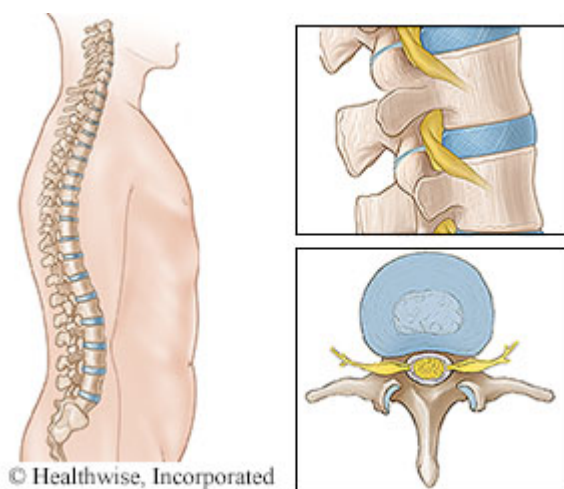


Medial Branch Neurotomy: What to Expect at Home



Your Recovery

Facet joints connect your vertebrae to each other. Problems in these joints can cause chronic (long-term) pain in the neck or back.

The medial branch nerves are the nerves that carry many of the pain messages from your facet joints.

During your medial branch neurotomy, your doctor used radio waves to damage a nerve in your neck or back to help your pain.

You may feel a little sore or tender at the injection site at first. After a successful neurotomy, most people have pain relief. And it usually lasts for several months, but your pain may return.

How can you care for yourself at home?



Activity

- You may want to do less than normal for a few days. But you may also be able to return to your daily routine.
- You may shower if your doctor okays it. Do not take a bath for the first 24 hours, or until your doctor tells you it is okay.



Diet

- You can eat your normal diet.



Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. The doctor will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you stopped taking aspirin or some other blood thinner, your doctor will tell you when to start taking it again.
- Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- You should be able to take your regular medicines again soon after the procedure. Your doctor may give you instructions on when to restart certain medicines, such as aspirin or a blood thinner like Coumadin.



Ice

- If the area feels sore or tender, put ice or a cold pack on it for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You are unable to move an arm or a leg at all.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse symptoms in your arms, legs, chest, belly, or buttocks. Symptoms may include:
 - Numbness or tingling.
 - Weakness.
 - Pain.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - A fever.
- You lose bladder or bowel control.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You are not getting better as expected.

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