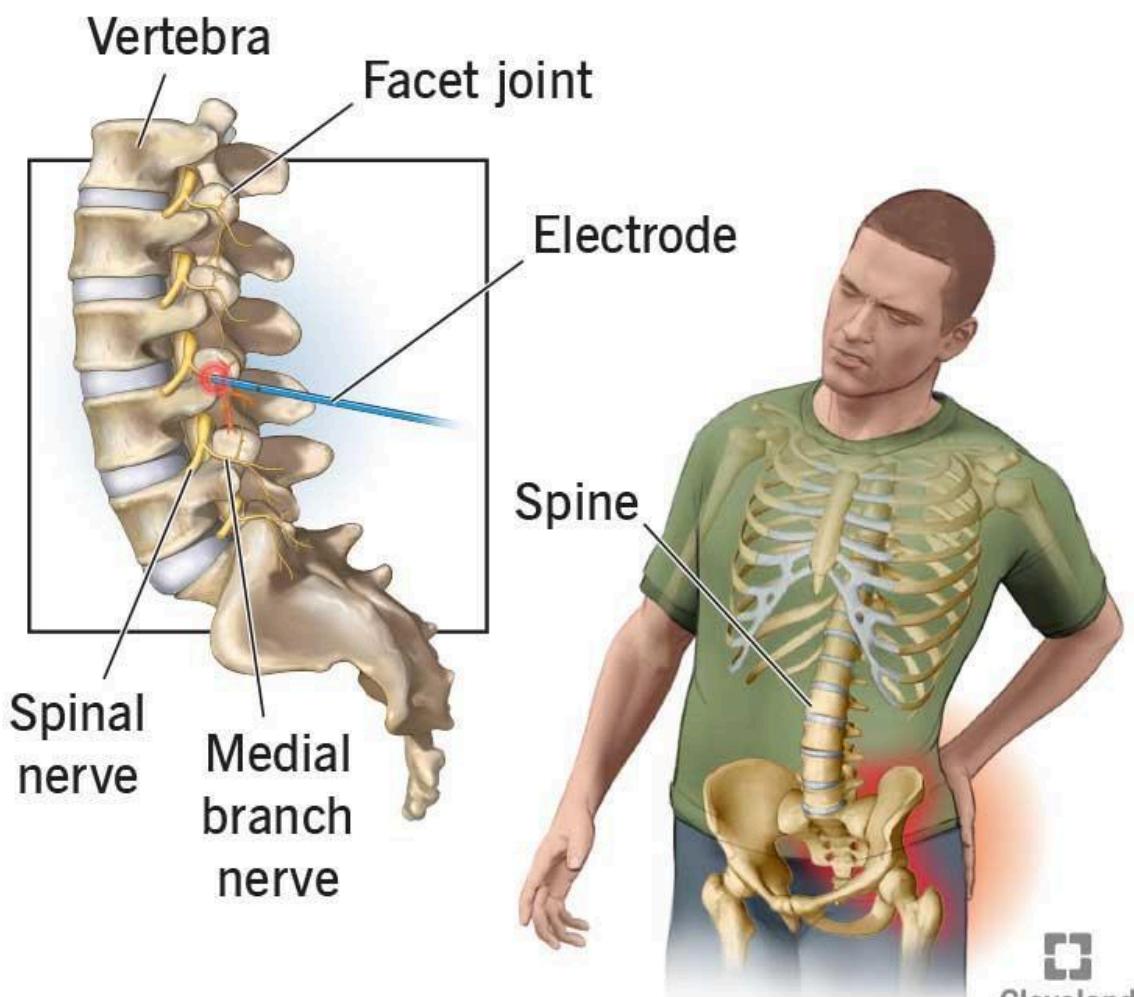
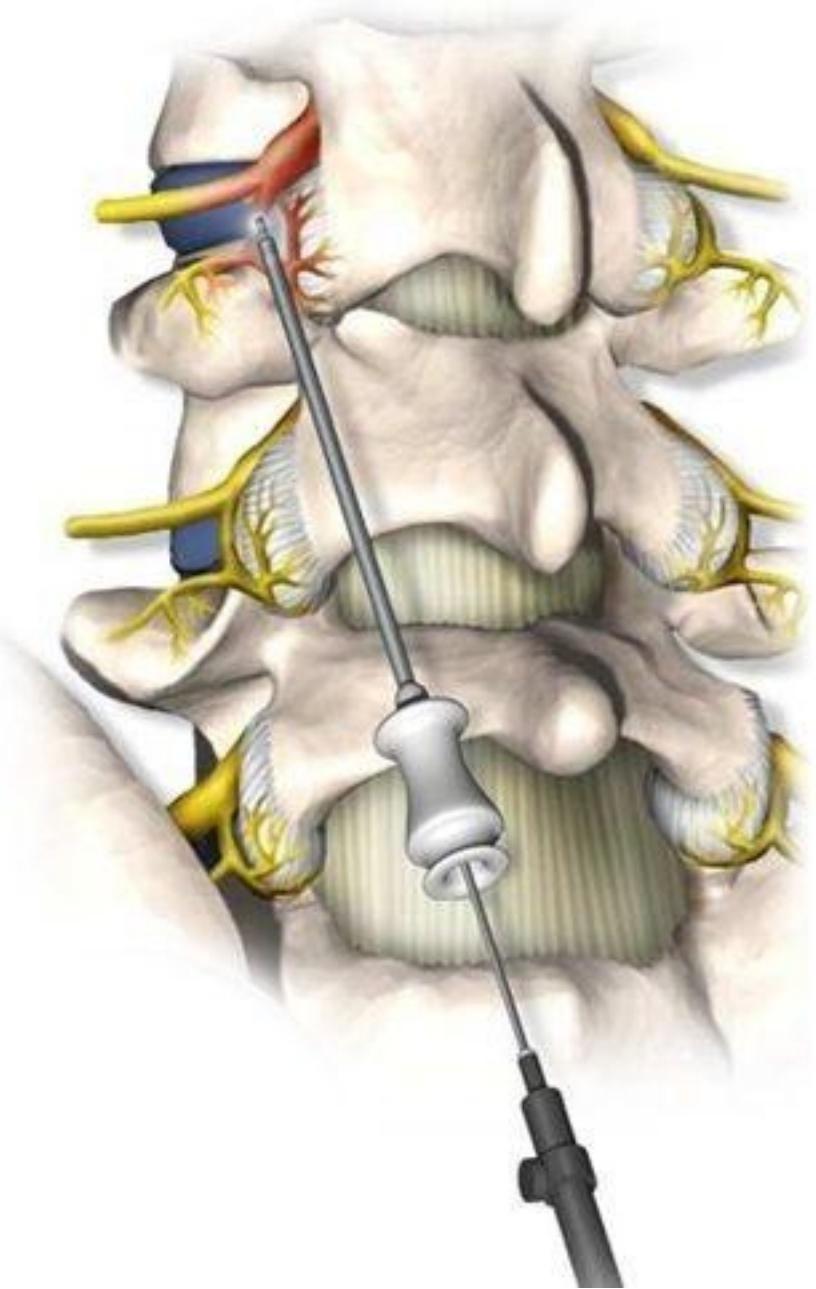
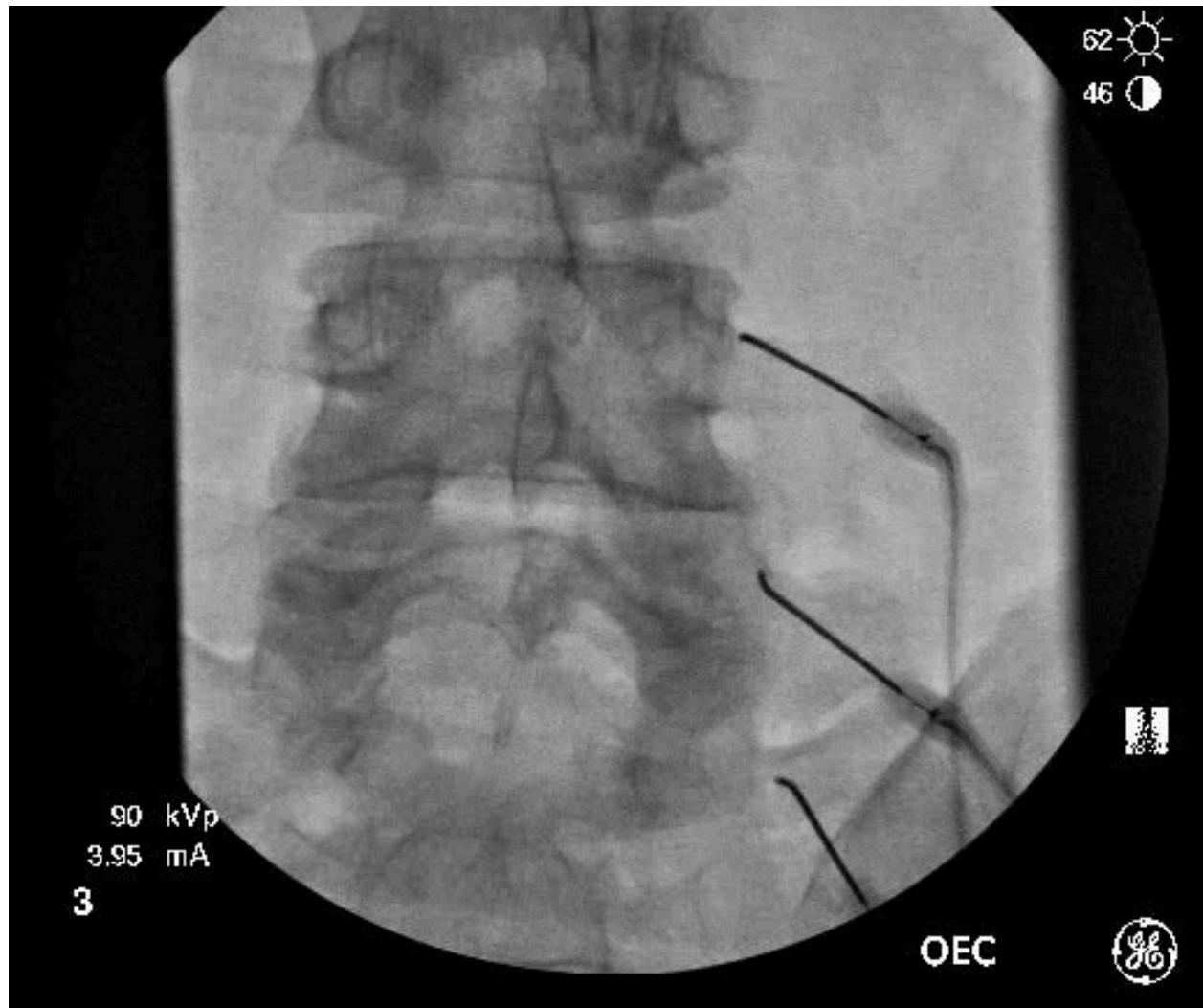


Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) *for Pain Management*







90 kVp
3.95 mA

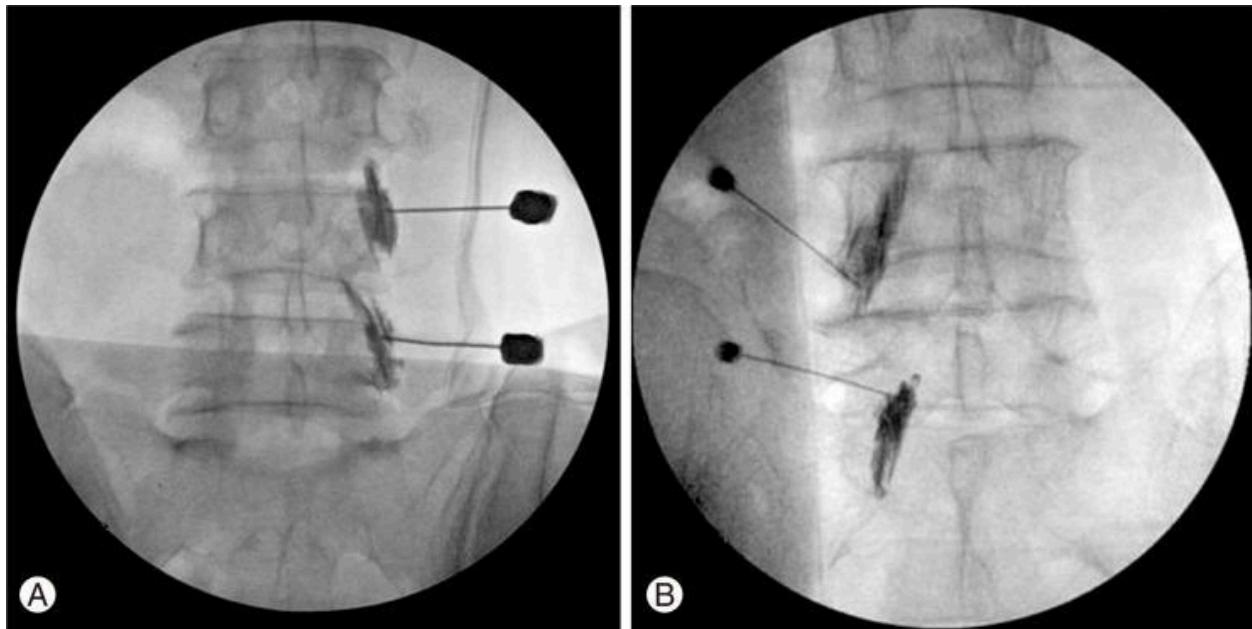
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What is Radiofrequency Ablation?

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a medical procedure used to reduce long-lasting back or neck pain. It works by turning off small pain nerves near the spine so they can no longer send pain signals to the brain.

RFA does **not** damage the spine or discs. It only affects the tiny nerves that carry pain signals from the joints in the spine.

What Kind of Pain Can RFA Help?

RFA is most often used for pain that comes from the **facet joints** of the spine. These joints help the spine move and can become painful due to arthritis or wear and tear.

RFA may help with:

- Chronic neck pain
- Chronic mid-back pain
- Chronic low back pain
- Pain that gets worse with bending, twisting, or standing

RFA is **not** used for nerve compression pain such as sciatica caused by a slipped disc.

How Do We Know RFA Is Right for You?

Before RFA, most patients have **diagnostic nerve blocks**. This involves freezing or numbing the pain nerves temporarily.

- If your pain improves after the test injections, it shows those nerves are the pain source
- If the test does **not** help, RFA is unlikely to work

RFA is only offered when these test injections are clearly helpful.

How Does the Procedure Work?

- You lie comfortably on a procedure table
- The skin is cleaned and frozen with local anesthetic
- Using X-ray guidance, the doctor places a thin needle near the pain nerve
- Heat from radiofrequency energy is applied for a short time
- This stops the nerve from sending pain signals

The procedure usually takes **20–45 minutes**.

Will I Be Awake?

Yes. You are awake but relaxed, using light sedation.

You will be able to go home the same day.

Does It Hurt?

Most patients feel:

- Pressure during the procedure
- Mild soreness afterward

Pain is usually mild and improves within a few days.

When Will I Feel Better?

- Pain relief does **not** happen immediately
- Improvement usually starts after **1–3 weeks**
- Some patients feel sore before they feel better

How Long Does the Relief Last?

Pain relief commonly lasts:

- **6 to 18 months**
- Sometimes longer

The nerves slowly grow back. If pain returns and RFA helped before, the procedure can often be repeated.

What Are the Risks?

RFA is considered very safe. Possible side effects include:

- Temporary soreness or swelling
- Bruising at the injection site
- Rarely, numbness or tingling

Serious complications are **very rare**.

What Should I Do After the Procedure?

- Take it easy for 24 hours
- Normal activity can usually resume the next day
- Avoid heavy lifting for a few days
- Use ice or simple pain medication if sore

Your doctor may recommend physiotherapy once pain improves.

Key Points to Remember

- RFA treats pain nerves, not the spine itself
 - It is used for long-term joint-related spine pain
 - Test injections are required first
 - Pain relief is delayed but often long-lasting
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Premier Pain Institute

 info@premierpain.ca

 647-477-7050