

Cervical Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) – Patient Instructions

Pre-Procedure Instructions

- You must have a driver the day of the procedure
- Do not eat for 6 hours prior (clear liquids up to 2 hours unless instructed otherwise)
- Take routine medications unless told otherwise
- Inform us if you are on blood thinners, pregnant, or have an active infection
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing
- Mild sedation may be used

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA)?

RFA uses controlled heat to interrupt pain signals from specific spinal nerves.

Why am I a candidate?

You previously had successful medial branch blocks confirming the pain source.

Is this permanent?

Pain relief typically lasts 6–18 months. Nerves may regenerate over time.

When will relief begin?

Relief may take 1–4 weeks as inflammation settles.

Is this surgery?

No. This is a minimally invasive outpatient procedure.

Post-Procedure Instructions

- Expect soreness for several days
- Avoid strenuous activity for 48 hours
- You may shower the next day
- Resume medications unless instructed otherwise
- Ice 20 minutes on/off during the first 24 hours
- Gradually return to normal activity

Normal / Expected Effects

- Localized soreness or bruising
- Muscle spasms
- Burning or sunburn-like sensation
- Temporary pain flare before improvement
- Mild numbness or tingling

Call Us Immediately If You Experience

- Progressive weakness
- Loss of bowel or bladder control
- Fever over 101°F
- Redness, swelling, or drainage at the site
- Severe or worsening pain beyond 7–10 days
- New numbness or weakness in arms or legs