

Lumbar Pulsed Radiofrequency Neurotomy

OVERVIEW

Also called Pulsed radiofrequency (Pulsed RF) rhizotomy, this procedure is done to reduce or stop pain in the spinal facets. A slight low temperature (42°C) pulsed electric current is used to cut the nerves. This short, minimally invasive procedure is done with local anesthetic or conscious sedation.

STEP 1

A needle-like tube called a cannula is inserted and positioned near the targeted dorsal root ganglion. A fluoroscope is used to help position the cannula properly.

STEP 2

A pulsed radiofrequency electrode is inserted down the cannula. To make sure it is in the correct location, a small amount of low temperature electricity stimulates the area.

STEP 3

To desensitize the nerve, the surgeon sends enough pulsed electricity through the electrode to heat the nerve. Once the neurotomy is done, the surgeon may repeat the same procedure at different levels.

END OF PROCEDURE

After the procedure, the electrode and cannula are removed. An increase in pain may occur for about a week after the procedure, with a full relief from pain seen within a month. Successful Pulsed RF neurotomies can last longer than steroid block injections.

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