



Radiofrequency Ablation

PATIENT INFORMATION & PROCEDURE GUIDE

Understanding Your Diagnosis

Following your successful Medial Branch Blocks, we have confirmed that your pain originates from the facet joints. While the blocks were a diagnostic test, Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) is the therapeutic solution designed to provide lasting relief from chronic neck or back pain caused by arthritis or joint degeneration.

The Treatment: Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA or RFTC)

RFA is a minimally invasive procedure that uses thermal energy to interrupt pain signals. Using a specialized needle, Dr. Pugh delivers radiofrequency waves to create a small heat lesion on the medial branch nerves. This effectively "mutes" the pain signals traveling from the arthritic joints to your brain, providing relief without the need for major surgery.

Our Approach: Transforaminal Approach

As an independent practice, our priority is your long-term functional success. We utilize Live X-Ray (Fluoroscopy) and precision testing to ensure the RFA probe is positioned with sub-millimeter accuracy. This evidence-based approach is designed to restore your mobility and reduce your reliance on oral medications, all within a professional, private-practice setting.

Procedure Day Highlights:

- Performed under **Live X-Ray (Fluoroscopy)** for maximum precision.
- We use sedation and local numbing medication to ensure a comfortable experience.
- The entire procedure typically lasts about 30-40 minutes.
- Patients return home shortly after the treatment is complete.

Benefits

- **Durable Relief:** Often provides significant pain reduction for 6 to 18 months.
- **Enhanced Mobility:** Helps you return to the activities and hobbies you enjoy.
- **Proven Alternative:** An effective non-surgical option for chronic spinal joint pain.

Recovery

- **Short-term Soreness:** You may feel mild localized tenderness for a few days following the procedure.
- **Results Timeline:** While some relief is immediate, full benefits typically develop over 2 to 4 weeks.
- **Long-term Care:** If nerves eventually regenerate and pain returns, the procedure can safely be repeated.

Nicolas Pugh, MD | **Adrianne Anders, NP** | **Ted Chaka, PA**

Abilene Pain Locations

Main: 1925 Hospital Drive

Chaka: 6819 Memorial Dr. Ste B

Contact Numbers

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Online

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DISCHARGE SUMMARY

Procedure Summary: Radiofrequency Ablation

You have undergone a Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA), a specialized procedure designed to provide long-term relief from chronic back or neck pain originating from the facet joints. Following your successful diagnostic blocks, we have used thermal energy to create a small heat lesion on the medial branch nerves. This "stuns" the nerves' ability to transmit pain signals from the joints to your brain, without affecting your ability to feel normal touch or movement.

Activity Restrictions

- **Driving:** No driving for 24 hours if you had IV sedation.
- **Lifting:** As tolerated
- **Exercise:** As Tolerated

Wound Care

- **First 24 Hours:** Leave dressings intact
- **Showering:** Okay to shower
- **Submersion:** Permitted after 24 hours

Pain Management Expectations

- **The "Sunburn" Flare:** It is normal to feel a deep, localized soreness or a "sunburn" sensation in the treated area for 1–2 weeks, however can last up to 6 weeks.
- **Management:** Use ice packs (20 min on/off) and resume baseline medications including NSAIDs/Aspirin immediately.
- **Results:** While some relief may occur sooner, peak benefits typically develop between 4 to 6 weeks as the nerves settle.

Red Flags

- New or worsening leg weakness, numbness, or **"foot drop."**
- Sudden loss of bowel or bladder control.
- **Fever** >101.5°F, chills, or **drainage at the incision site.**
- **Severe headache** that worsens when sitting or standing.

Follow-Up Schedule

- **4–6 weeks:** Formal functional assessment of procedural efficacy.

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