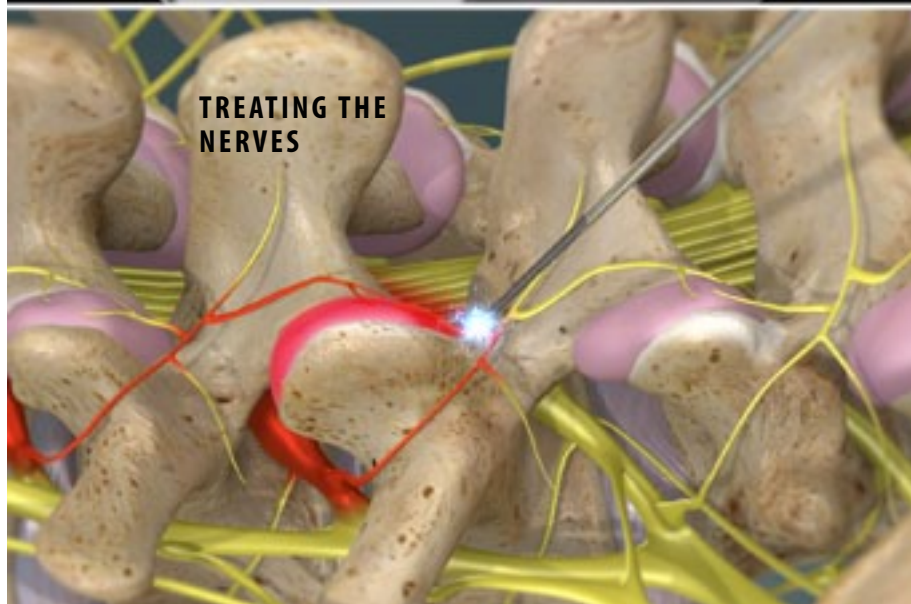
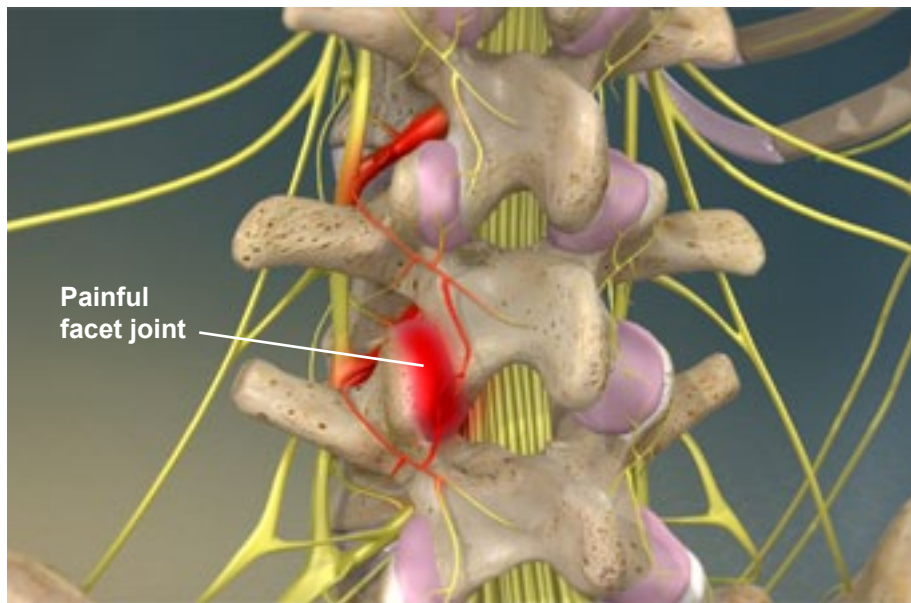


Radiofrequency Neurotomy of the Lumbar Facets



Overview

This procedure uses heat from radio waves to treat painful facet joints in your lower back. It eases pain that isn't helped by medications or physical therapy.

Preparation

To begin, you lie on your stomach. You may be given medicine to relax you. We numb the skin and tissue of your lower back. Next, we guide a tube called a "cannula" to your spine. A video x-ray device called a "fluoroscope" helps guide the tube to the medial branch nerves. These tiny nerves carry pain signals from your facet joints to your brain.

Treating the nerves

Now, we push an electrode through the cannula and down to these nerves. We test its position with a weak jolt of energy. If this recreates your pain, we know it's in the right place. Then, we heat the nerves with radio waves. Heating them blocks their ability to carry pain signals. We may need to treat several nerves.

End of procedure

When it's done, you get a small bandage on your skin. You're watched in a recovery room for a brief time. Then, you can go home. You may feel sore, and you may still have back pain. But you'll gradually feel pain relief. This can take several weeks.