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Vertebrogenic Pain Journey

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explaining your
Vertebrogenic
Pain Journey

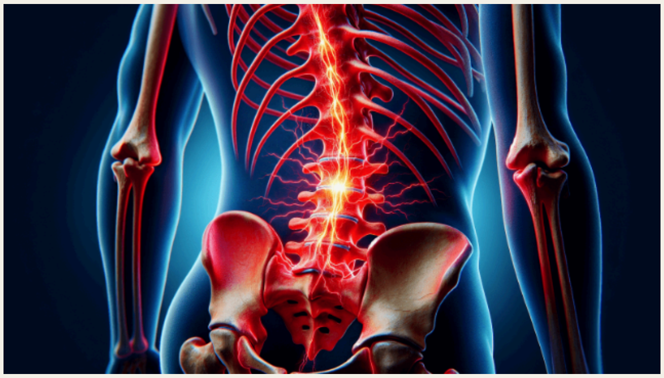
Your Journey with Basivertebral Nerve Ablation (RFA)

What is Basivertebral Nerve RFA?
Basivertebral nerve radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a minimally invasive treatment for chronic lower back pain caused by damaged vertebrae in the lower spine (lumbar region).

What Is Vertebrogenic Pain?
Vertebrogenic pain comes from damage to the vertebral bones, often due to degenerative disc disease or endplate damage. The basivertebral nerve carries pain signals from the bones to your brain, leading to:

- Constant, dull back pain.
- Pain that worsens with sitting, standing, or activity.
- Little relief from physical therapy, medications, or injections.

How the Procedure Works
The goal of RFA is to block the nerve from sending pain signals to the brain, offering long-term relief.



Step-by-Step Process

1. Preparation:
    - You'll receive local anesthesia and mild sedation.
    - You'll lie face down on the treatment table.
2. Needle Placement:
    - Using X-ray guidance, a small incision is made, and a probe is inserted near the nerve.
3. Applying Heat:
    - Radiofrequency energy is used to stop the nerve from sending pain signals.
4. Closing the Incision:
    - The incision is so small that no stitches are needed—just a bandage.

Benefits of Basivertebral RFA

- Long-lasting relief: It targets the source of pain, not just the symptoms.
- Minimally invasive: Small incision, minimal bleeding, and no hospital stay.
- No implants: Unlike surgery, nothing is left in your body.
- Better quality of life: Many patients can return to normal activities with less pain.

Recovery and What to Expect

- Go home the same day.
- Light activities: Within a few days.
- Pain relief: Some feel better in weeks, while others take months.

Lasting Results
Since the nerve doesn't regenerate quickly, pain relief can be long-term.

Your Treatment Steps

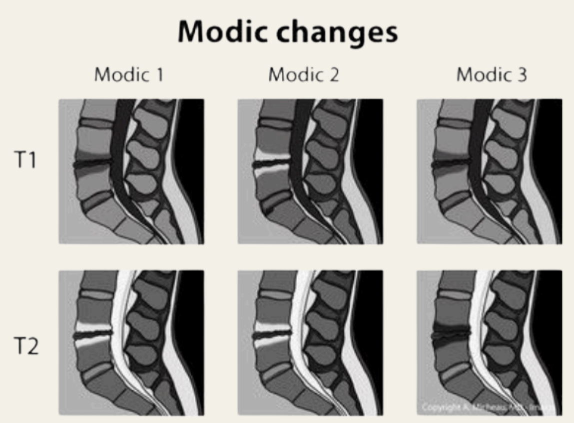
Step 1: Evaluation
Your doctor will review your back pain and MRI results. If needed, a new MRI will be ordered.

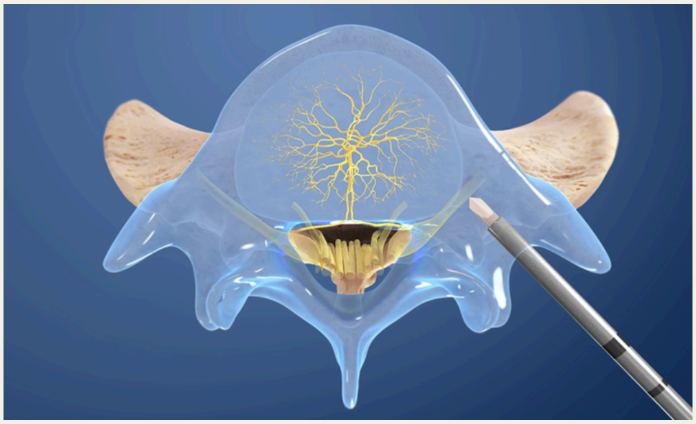
Step 2: MRI Review
We'll use your MRI to confirm if your pain comes from the vertebrae in your lower spine.

Step 3: Checking for Compression Fractures
If a fracture is found, RFA isn't the right option, and other treatments will be discussed.

Step 4: Looking for Modic Changes

- If Modic 1 or 2 changes are found: You may be a good candidate for RFA.
- If no Modic changes or Modic 3 changes are found: Other treatment options will be explored





Step 5: Pain from Other Areas
If your pain is from other parts of the spine, we'll refer you to a specialist for different treatments.

Step 6: The Procedure
If RFA is recommended, the procedure will be done using heat to stop pain signals.

Step 7: Follow-Up
You'll have follow-ups at:

- 2 weeks – To check early progress.
- 3 months – To see how well the procedure is working.

Basivertebral Nerve RFA: FAQs

What happens at my first appointment?

- Your doctor will review your medical history and symptoms.
- Your MRI will be checked for signs of vertebrogenic pain.
- We'll confirm if you're a good fit for RFA.

How is my condition diagnosed?

- The doctor will check your MRI for signs of Modic changes (Types 1 or 2).
- Other causes like fractures or instability will be ruled out.

What are degenerative disc disease and endplate damage?

- Degenerative Disc Disease (DDD) happens when the cushions (discs) between your spine's bones wear down over time, causing pain, stiffness, and reduced flexibility.
- Endplate damage refers to the weakening of the thin layers between the discs and bones, which can lead to inflammation and persistent back pain.

How long does the MRI evaluation take?

Reviewing your MRI may take 15–30 minutes. If a new MRI is needed, it could take longer.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- Don't eat or drink for several hours before.
- Arrange a ride home.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes.

How long does the procedure take?

The entire process usually takes about 30–60 minutes.

Will it hurt?

The procedure itself isn't painful thanks to anesthesia. You might feel mild soreness afterward, but it usually goes away quickly.

Is anesthesia used?

Yes, local anesthesia and mild sedation will keep you comfortable.

What are the possible risks?

- Mild soreness or bruising.
- Rarely, infection, bleeding, or nerve damage.

How long is recovery?

- Most patients resume light activities in a few days.
- Full recovery varies but usually takes a few weeks.

How many follow-ups will I need?

At least two follow-ups:

- 2 weeks – To check how you're doing.
- 3 months – To assess long-term progress.

What happens at follow-ups?

- The doctor will check your pain and mobility.
- Imaging may be reviewed to ensure the treatment is working.

Basivertebral Nerve RFA: FAQs

What happens if I don't treat my back pain?
It can continue to affect daily activities, lead to dependence on pain medications and cause decreased mobility over time.

When can I get back to normal activities?
- Light activities: Within a few days.
- Strenuous activities: After a few weeks with your doctor's approval.

When will I feel better?
Some feel relief within weeks, others may take a few months as the body adjusts.

How do I know if the procedure is working?
- If it's working: Pain relief, better mobility, and reduced medication use.
- If it's not working: Persistent pain means you should follow up for other options.

Understanding Pain and Sedation During Your Procedure

Everyone experiences pain and sedation differently, and your comfort level during the procedure can depend on several factors, including your body's response to anesthesia. For example, individuals who regularly consume alcohol or those living with chronic pain may require adjustments to achieve the right level of sedation.

Our goal is to ensure you are as comfortable as possible while keeping your safety our top priority. While we aim to provide effective pain relief, it's important to recognize that over-sedation carries certain risks, which our medical team carefully monitors and manages.