

PULSED RADIOFREQUENCY

PATIENT INFORMATION



PAIN CENTRE

McGILL UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTRE

When a nerve is malfunctioning it sometimes created chronic pain. Pulsed radio frequency is an intervention to try and relieve this pain.

Before having a radio pulsed frequency intervention you will have undergone a diagnostic block. This allows your doctor to know the exact location of the nerves that causes your pain.

What is pulsed radio frequency?

It is an electrical current that is sent in short bursts through a special needle near the painful nerve. The nerve reacts to the electricity by changing its behavior. This should be sufficient to relieve the pain.

How is the treatment done?

This intervention is done in the operating room.

An x-ray will be used to locate the nerve. Your doctor will freeze the skin before inserting this special needle.

Then a small current is applied to the needle; this may cause a tingling sensation or reproduce the pain that you usually have.

It is important that you let your doctor know when you start feeling these sensations, this way he will know how close he is to the nerve.

You must try to keep your muscles relaxed. If you contract your muscle, chances are you will displace the thin needle completely.

Once the needle is in place, the actual intervention will start; it may cause some unusual sensations. It may also cause some strong muscle contractions that may or may not be painful depending on the area of the nerve.

You will not be put asleep for this procedure.

How long will it help the pain?

Pulsed radio frequency changes the behavior of the nerve but this take time. Typically it takes 3 to 4 weeks to see the results.

Are there any possible complications?

The method of pulsed radio frequency to the best of our knowledge has no complications. It is a harmless, non-destructive method.

However, you must keep in mind that inserting a needle into a human body can always cause some bleeding or infection.

Before your treatment you should:

- **Not eat or drink**
- **Plan to have someone take you home after this intervention**
- **Bring your pills and hospital cards**
- **Take all your medications as usual except diabetic and blood thinning medication.**
- **Tell the doctor if you have any allergies.**

On the day of your treatment:

- **Arrive 1 hour before your treatment**
- **Go to the 7-floor room E7-102 and sign in**
- **After the treatment you will go to the recovery room for an observation period.**

If you have:

- **Fever over 38**
- **A lot of bleeding at the site**
- **Questions about this procedure**

Call us at the pain center:

(514) 934-8242 and request to speak to your doctor or to a nurse.



Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

IMPORTANT : PLEASE READ

Information provided in this pamphlet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.