

# Radiofrequency Ablation: What Is It and How Does It Work?

Do you suffer from chronic pain?

Between [28% - 65% of U.S. adults](#) suffer from chronic pain. The World Health Organization estimates 22% of those who suffer have chronic debilitating pain and don't know how to manage it.

You deserve to be free from the pain that has been controlling your life. Radiofrequency ablation is a treatment that may help.

Learn more about radiofrequency ablation and find out if it's the right treatment for you.

## What Is Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) and How Does It Work?

[Radiofrequency ablation](#) is a procedure that uses radiofrequency energy waves to heat up and destroy the nerves in the body that cause you pain.

It's a safe and effective procedure for chronic pain performed by surgeons, radiologists, physiatrists, neurologists, and anesthesiologists. They guide a thin needle to the area where you are feeling pain. Once the needle is in place, they send out radiofrequency waves that will heat up and destroy the nerves.

## How Do You Prepare for the Procedure?

Before the procedure, you will need to stop taking any blood thinners. These can include aspirin, ibuprofen, and warfarin. You will also need to avoid eating or drinking several hours before the procedure.

They may give you a sedative to help you relax during the procedure. And you will usually be awake but numb so you don't feel any pain.

## What to Expect During the Procedure

Radiofrequency ablation is usually done as an outpatient.

Your doctor may inject numbing medication and administer sedatives to keep you comfortable. Then small surgical openings are made into the skin near the nerves that cause your pain, making it easier for the probe needle to pass through.

The doctor will then apply the radiofrequency energy to destroy the nerve endings near where you feel pain. This will disrupt the pain signal to your brain.

## What to Expect Post-procedure

When the doctor has completed the procedure, they may place a bandage over the small openings on your skin. You should not need any sutures.

You will be moved into a room to rest and they will manage any pain you may have through your IV or an injection.

You should expect some pain and swelling following the procedure. This is temporary. Once you are home, you can manage it with oral medication.

Most people can return to work a few days after the procedure. Recovery times will vary from person to person.

## The Benefits of Doing a Radiofrequency Ablation

The benefits of having a radiofrequency ablation procedure done include:

- Less pain following the procedure.
- Outpatient surgery, which means you will go home the same day
- Lower risk of infection compared with traditional open surgery
- Recovery times are typically shorter than other procedures
- Less scarring than traditional open surgery
- It may help you avoid invasive surgeries in the future
- Radiofrequency ablation cost is often less than other treatment options
- It can provide relief from pain for months or even years
- You can repeat it if a nerve grows back and the pain returns
- It is minimally invasive, so it doesn't require a large incision or a long recovery time

Radiofrequency ablation may be the right choice for you if other treatments haven't worked or you are at risk for other invasive surgeries.

## What Are the Risks of Treatment?

The risks associated with RFA include:

- Infection
- Nerve damage
- Bleeding
- Pain that continues or worsens after the procedure
- Swelling
- Scarring from the surgical openings on your skin
- Numbness at the location of the procedure
- Allergic reaction to medication and/or pain relievers
- No pain relief (the procedure wasn't successful)

Most people tolerate radiofrequency ablation well, but it is important to discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

## Who Should Consider Radiofrequency Ablation as a Treatment Option?

Individuals who have chronic pain and have not found relief from other treatments may want to consider RFA. This includes:

- Neck or back pain
- Sciatica, sciatic nerve pain that travels down the leg
- Facet joint pain and facet syndrome (arthritis of the joints in the spine)
- Knee arthritis from degenerative osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis
- Pain that radiates to the shoulder, arm, or hand from other parts of the body
- Complex regional pain syndrome (a chronic pain condition that most often affects one limb)
- It may be possible for people who have had back surgery but continue to have pain

There are many other conditions radiofrequency ablation may help, but it is best to speak with your doctor to determine if this treatment option is right for you.

## Finding the Right Equipment

At RF Generator Exchange, we are committed to helping you find the right radiofrequency ablation equipment. We carry a wide variety of RF generators and RF electrodes to help make treatment a success.

Contact us today to learn more about our products and services.