

Radio Frequency Denervation (RFG)



What is a RFG?

Your doctor feels that this special procedure may help to reduce your pain. This is how it works. There are pain pathways in your body that tell your brain you are having pain. RFG or Facet Joint Denervation uses a special machine that produces “waves” to interrupt those pathways. These “waves” are similar to microwaves. Special needles are connected to the machine and are used to treat those areas. This procedure may be repeated many times, every 4-6 months. Sometimes it does not help and will not be repeated.

Getting ready for the RFG

- Before your appointment, take your medications and eat your meals (light) unless the doctor gives you other instructions.
- **You will need to arrange for someone to escort and drive you home. This is hospital policy. Your treatment will be cancelled if you do not make these arrangements.**
- Go to the 10th floor, VG and register. You will be asked to change into a “johnny shirt” and dressing gown and then answer a few questions.
- You will be taken to the “**Block Room**”. The doctor will further assess your pain.
- An intravenous (IV) will be started. Medication to help you relax (but not put you asleep) may be given through the IV.

The RFG

- You may ask questions at any time about your RFG.
- You will be asked to lie on your tummy on a stretcher.
- A special x-ray machine that moves around you will be used so you will not have to move.
- After the doctor cleans your back with a special solution, local freezing is used before the RFG needles are placed in your back.
- You may feel discomfort when the needles are put in place. It is important to tell the doctor what you are feeling. This helps to guide the doctor.

- It takes a needle about 70 seconds to destroy the pain-producing pathway. About 12 areas may be treated in this way.

After the RFG

- You will be taken by wheelchair to the room next to the “**Block Room**” (Post Recovery Room) to be observed for about 20 minutes.
- Your escort will then take you home. **Do not drive for 24 hours.**

Special care at home after the RFG

- Take it easy for the first 48 hours. It is important not to “over do it” when you are feeling better.
- The area on your back that was treated may feel sore. Ice packs on your back may help the discomfort for the first couple of days.
- You may have a “flare up” of your pain for 7-10 days.
- Take your usual pain pills, unless your doctor gives you other directions.
- Call the Pain Management Unit if you have:
 - any redness in the area of the procedure.
 - a fever.
 - numbness, heaviness or an awkward feeling in one of your arms or legs.



You may call the Pain Management Unit at 473-7672 or 473-4130. Remember to see your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency room if you need medical attention.

- Healthy eating, moderate exercise (if your doctor tells you it is OK) and good sleep habits are helpful for healing and maintaining a strong mind and body.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and online health information. For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to [HTTP://publiclibraries.ns.ca](http://publiclibraries.ns.ca)

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Capital Health, Nova Scotia

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