



## **Trigeminal Nerve Radiofrequency Ablation**

### **What is trigeminal nerve radiofrequency ablation?**

A trigeminal nerve radiofrequency ablation is a procedure that helps relieve facial pain. It's used to treat:

- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Herpes zoster infection (or "shingles") affecting the face
- Other atypical facial pain syndromes

Trigeminal nerves are responsible for sensations in your face and for helping you bite, chew and swallow. Blocking these nerves can help you stop feeling facial pain.

### **What is radiofrequency ablation for trigeminal neuralgia?**

Ablation is a medical term that refers to the removal of tissue. Radiofrequency ablation, or RFA, is a surgical technique that directs high-frequency heat onto targeted areas of the body, such as tissues, tumors and - in the case of chronic pain - nerves.

### **What happens during radiofrequency ablation for trigeminal neuralgia?**

After X-rays confirm the needle is in place, your physician will wake you up, stimulate the nerve and ask if you feel the stimulation in the same place where you experience pain. This step confirms that your doctor has targeted the right location.

Radiofrequency heat to slightly injure the nerve just enough that it causes some facial numbness and tingling and takes the pain away.

### **What to expect after radiofrequency ablation?**

This procedure works in 70-80 percent of patients. Fifty percent of patients will experience recurrent pain in two years. The treatment can be repeated if pain recurs. Do not drive or perform any vigorous activity for 12-24 hours after the procedure. You can return to normal activities the following day. You will be able to resume your normal diet and medications. Your physician will schedule your follow up appointment.

### **Is a trigeminal nerve radiofrequency ablation right for you?**

A trigeminal nerve radiofrequency ablation may be right for you if you have facial pain that respond to trigeminal nerve block well but only for a short time. Talk to your physician about your symptoms and he/she will help decide what is right for you.