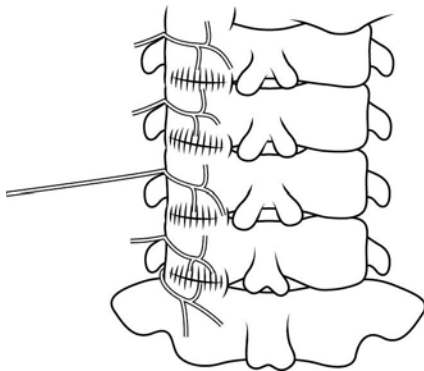


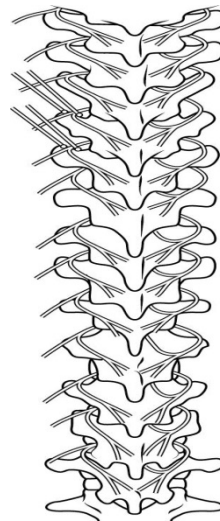
Rhizotomy (ri-ZOT-o-me) or Radiofrequency Lesioning

Rhizotomy is an x-ray guided procedure, where heat is applied to the nerves that are responsible for causing your pain. The purpose of rhizotomy is to decrease back or neck pain and improve function. The heat causes a lesion which interrupts the pain pathway to the facet joint in your spinal column. These joints provide stability and guide motion in your neck, middle and lower back.

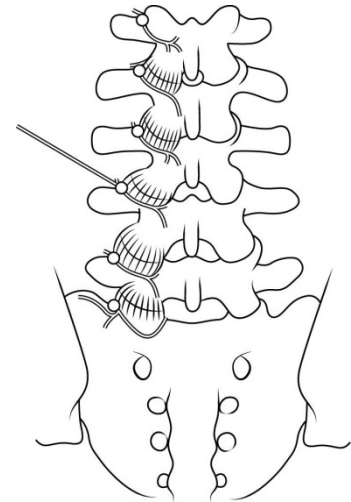
This procedure is done only if pain is relieved temporarily by facet joint block or medial branch block injections. Rhizotomy is similar to a facet joint injection or medial branch block. It targets the same structures.



Cervical



Thoracic



Lumbar

Before your appointment

- If you are taking blood thinning and/or anti-platelet medications, ask the doctor or nurse for instructions, at least 2 weeks before the procedure.
- If you are unwell, have a fever, or are on antibiotics, please call us at the Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic 905-521-2100, extension 44621.
- Eat a light meal and drink before your appointment.
- If you are an insulin dependent diabetic, do not change your normal eating patterns and take your routine medications.
- Come to the Pain Clinic 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment.
- Bring a list of your current medications to every appointment.
- Please notify the Pain Clinic if you have a pacemaker.
- Let us know if you have an allergy to x-ray dye.
- An x-ray may be taken. If you are of child-bearing age, please let us know if you could be pregnant.
- **Arrange to have a ride home.** You may be in the Pain Clinic for about 2½ hours.

When you first arrive at your appointment

- You will be asked to complete a pain level questionnaire.
- Change into a patient gown.
- Please talk with the nurse about any change in pain that you are experiencing, medications you are taking and your activity level.
- Have your blood pressure taken.
- Sign your consent form.
- You may also have an IV (intravenous) started.
- Walk with a nurse into the procedure room.

It is very important that you are aware and understand fully the risks and benefits of the procedure before a decision is made.

During the injection

A nurse will be with you at all times during the procedure. You will lie on a stretcher on your stomach, and you must be very still. Your heart rate and oxygen level will be checked. Pillows may be used for positioning and comfort. An intravenous sedation and pain medicine may be given for comfort. **You cannot drive for 24 hours after having this medication.**

X-rays are taken to identify the targeted structure. During the procedure a sensory and motor test may be done to determine the right place for the lesion. You will be asked to identify your sensations and location at this time.

You can expect the procedure to be somewhat uncomfortable, and may feel pain similar to your initial pain problem. Make sure to let the doctor know if you are experiencing any pain that is more than moderate in intensity or pain that involves your shoulder area or buttock and leg.

After the injection

- You will remain for about 15 to 30 minutes in the recovery area. A nurse will check you and your blood pressure.
- You may move and change position for comfort.
- Your IV will be removed.
- A follow-up appointment may be made before you leave the Pain Clinic.
- You will need a ride home because sedating medication will be given during the procedure.

When you get home

- Remove your bandage when you go to bed.
- Do not soak in a tub bath, swimming pool or hot tub for 24 hours after the injection.
- Use ice packs for discomfort. Keep the ice pack on for only 20 minutes every hour, if needed.
- You can get back to your normal activities and exercises the next day.
- Take pain medication if needed.

Side effects

- You may have a burning sensation at the injection site that should soon go away.
- You may have some pain at the injection site and your back or neck may ache. Take your pain medication as needed. You should apply ice to the injection site for 20 minutes every hour if needed. **Wrap the ice pack in a towel before you apply it.**
- You may feel unsteady on your feet for the rest of the day.

Emergency

- Go to Emergency if you have progressive numbness or loss of sensation within 12 hours of your injection.

Call the Pain Clinic if you have:

- a severe headache
- a fever greater than 38°C or 100.4°F
- redness at the injection site
- severe back pain
- new numbness or weakness in the days after your injection

**Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic
McMaster University Medical Centre
905-521-2100, extension 44621**