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PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS RADIOFREQUENCY RHIZOTOMY

Your doctor has recommended a radiofrequency rhizotomy. This is done to treat your symptoms. The levels of your spine this will be done at have been determined by your doctor after reviewing your previous testing and evaluating your symptoms. If you have any questions about the procedure, please let us know.

YOUR PROCEDURE IS SCHEDULED AT:

- ELLIOT HOSPITAL RIVERS EDGE (please plan to arrive 45 minutes prior to your injection)**
 CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER (please plan to arrive 30 minutes prior to your injection)

Please advise our office if there is any chance that you are:

1. Pregnant or chance of being pregnant
2. Allergic to anesthetic, steroid, radiologic dye, seafood, latex or medicines
3. Have an active infection or are taking an antibiotic

Please follow these directions before having this injection:

We do need you to have a driver from the hospital for your ride home. This will be verified before your procedure is performed and it will be rescheduled if you are not accompanied by a driver.

Medications: Please notify us if you are taking the following medications

- **Coumadin , Warfarin or Lovenox (blood thinners)** - let us know 1 week prior to your injection as this will need to be stopped and blood work done prior to the procedure. Please check with your prescribing MD for authorization prior to stopping this medication.
- **Aspirin 325 mg or Plavix (clopidogrel)** - stop taking for 5 days prior to the procedure. Please check with your prescribing MD for authorization prior to stopping this medication.
- **Metformin or Glucophage** – stop for 24 hours before and after your injection.

Take your usual medication on the day of the procedure, with the exceptions discussed above.

- **If you are diabetic**, please check your blood sugar before your appointment. The injection may cause your blood sugar to elevate. After the injection, check your blood sugar frequently for the next 2-3 days. Make adjustments as necessary. You may have to notify your doctor who treats your diabetes so the blood sugar can be treated appropriately.

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What to expect when you arrive:

You will be brought into the fluoroscopy suite and be prepared for the procedure.

- Your vital signs (blood pressure and pulse) will be evaluated during the procedure.
- You will be asked to lie on your stomach for the procedure. Your back will be cleansed and a sterile drape will be placed on your back.
- Fluoroscopy (x-ray imaging) is used to get an x-ray of your spine. Contrast “dye” may be injected to help confirm placement of the needles.
- To verify the needle position, the nerve may be stimulated using low voltage electricity. The stimulation will cause the affected muscles to rhythmically contract.
- The doctor will then use numbing medication (anesthetic) to put the nerve to sleep.
- The doctor will then apply heat to the nerve via the electrode for approximately 60 seconds. This heat is designed to create a lesion, causing the nerve to become cauterized or burnt, which in turn breaks the communication link to the brain.
- The procedure is then repeated at other levels including the levels above and below where the pain is originating.

What to expect after the procedure:

- You may have some soreness at the injection sites, if so applying ice will help.
- You may experience numbness and/or relief from your symptoms for 2-8 hours after the procedure due to the anesthetic.
- Once the anesthetic effects have worn off, your usual symptoms may return and may be more severe for up to 5-7 days following the procedure.
- The day after your injection, you can remove the band aids and wash with soap and water. You may resume your pre-procedure activities.

Patients must understand that approximately 10-12% of those who have undergone an RF procedure experience elevated pain for up to 4 weeks, rather than improvement. Improvement is usually noticed by the 2-3 week following the procedure. However, it may take up to 4 weeks before the beneficial effects of the RF are noted and a decrease in your symptoms is realized.

When to call us:

- Severe pain
- Fever or chills
- Redness or swelling around the injection sites
- Loss of bowel or bladder

Insurance authorizations:

As with any part of your overall health care, it is important to understand what your insurance benefits are. As the patient, it is your responsibility to understand the financial obligations based on your insurance coverage. The place where a service is rendered may have a significant impact on your coverage and out of pocket cost. You should consult with your insurance company to determine which option would be most beneficial to you. NH NeuroSpine Institute will be happy to provide you with the procedure codes of your proposed procedure which will enable you to obtain the most accurate insurance benefits. It is NHNSI's responsibility to ensure that authorization has been obtained in the event that your insurance company requires it. If you have any questions regarding any of this please contact our pre-certification coordinator at 603-472-8888 ext 358.