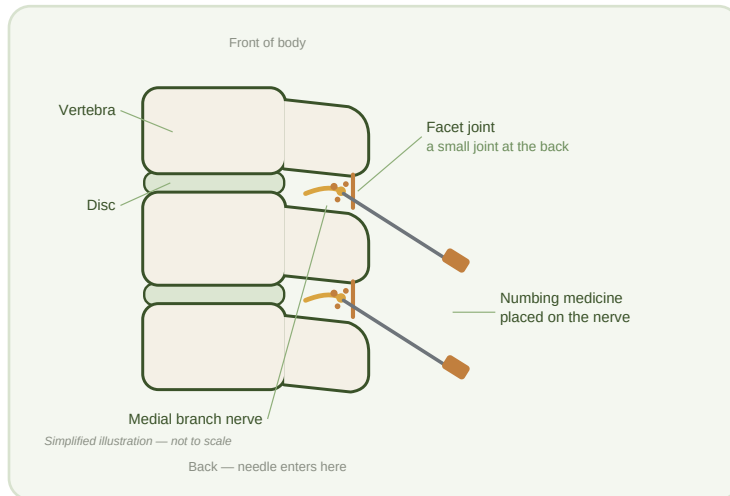


Medial branch block

A test, not a treatment. Numbing medicine is placed on the small nerves that carry pain from the facet joints of your spine. If your pain improves temporarily, those joints are likely the source — and that tells us whether radiofrequency ablation is likely to help you.



How long it takes

About 15–20 minutes. Plan on roughly an hour at the clinic, including check-in and a short rest afterward.

How it's done

You lie face down. The skin is numbed first, and live X-ray guides each needle to the nerve. Usually two or more levels are treated at once.

Where it happens

[Confirm: office procedure suite or St. Charles Surgical Center]

Going home

Same day. If you receive sedation, you will need a driver.

Because this is a diagnostic test, the goal is information — not lasting relief. What you record afterward decides what comes next.

Before your visit

- take a blood thinner, including daily aspirin
- have diabetes, an infection, or a fever
- are allergic to contrast dye, iodine, or latex
- are or may be pregnant
- Bring your photo ID, insurance card, medication list, and any recent MRI or X-ray.
- Do not stop any medication unless your care team tells you to.

After your procedure

- **Keep track of your pain for the rest of the day.**
This is the most important part — the block is a test, and your notes are the result.
- Rate your pain hourly for about 6 hours, and note what activities you could do that you normally couldn't.
- Relief is expected to be temporary — often only hours. That is normal and does not mean it failed.
- Mild soreness where the needles went in is common for a day or two.
- Bring your notes to your follow-up visit.

Call us — (805) 557-7050

a fever; redness, swelling, or drainage at an injection site; or pain that is much worse than before.

Call 911 or go to the nearest ER

new weakness in your legs, numbness in the groin or inner thighs, or loss of bladder or bowel control.

This sheet is general information, not medical advice. Your care team will give you instructions specific to your situation — follow those if they differ from this sheet.