



# After Your Radiofrequency Ablation

*Self-care and what to expect*

Your doctor today was:

---

This handout explains follow-up care after radiofrequency ablation.

This procedure “burns” the nerve that is causing your pain.

You will need to keep a diary of your pain symptoms for 4 weeks after your procedure.

## Activity

- Do **not** drive or use machinery for 24 hours after your ablation.
- Take your usual pain medicines if you have pain after your procedure.
- If you have pain relief right after your procedure, do **not** start doing all the activities you have not been able to do because of your pain. Remember, you still have the underlying problem that caused your pain. If you overdo it, your pain may return quickly, even within a few days of feeling better.
- It is important to do an exercise program that slowly strengthens the muscles that you have not been able to use because of your pain. It will take some time to build up your strength.

## Medicines

If you stopped taking any blood-thinning medicine such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or enoxaparin (Lovenox), you may start taking it again the day after your procedure, unless your doctor who prescribed it tells you otherwise.

## Site Care

- You may remove the bandage from your injection site after 6 hours.
- For the first 24 hours after your procedure, hold an ice pack on the injection site for 15 to 20 minutes every 1 or 2 hours for comfort as needed. Wrap a light towel or cloth around the ice pack to protect your skin.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.:

Call the Center for Pain Relief at 206-598-4282.

After hours and on weekends and holidays:

Call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Pain Fellow on call to be paged.

---

---

---

---

- After 24 hours, you may use either heat or ice on the injection site, whichever is more comfortable. Wrap a light towel or cloth around the ice pack or heating pad to protect your skin.
- You may shower after your procedure.
- For 24 hours after your procedure, do **not** swim or soak in a bathtub or hot tub.

## When to Call Us

Call us at 206-598-4282 if you develop any of these symptoms in the next 7 days:

- Fever above 100°F (37.8°C).
- Any unusual increase in your level of pain.
- Any signs of infection at the site of the procedure or the IV insertion site:
  - Swelling
  - Bleeding
  - Redness
  - Increased tenderness

## Follow-up

You will be given the *Patient Self-Reported 4-Week Pain Diary*. You will use this to write down your pain levels after your procedure.

As instructed in the pain diary, you **must** call 206-598-2442 4 weeks after your procedure to report your results.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
**MEDICAL CENTER**  
UW Medicine

Center for Pain Relief

Box 354692

4225 Roosevelt Way N.E., Suite 401

Seattle, WA 98105

206-598-4282