

How to care for yourself after a rhizotomy

You had a rhizotomy today. Sometimes this procedure is also called a radiofrequency ablation (RFA) or a neurotomy. The goal of the procedure is to reduce pain.

During this procedure, a small amount of electricity was used to destroy nerves that cause pain. Patients usually feel relief from their pain about two weeks after the procedure. That relief may last for up to one year.

These instructions will help you care for yourself after your rhizotomy. It is very important to follow the instructions below so that you heal well at home. If you have questions or something doesn't seem right, please call your doctor. Contact information is at the end of this document.

Instructions for after your procedure

First 24 hours after your procedure

- Get lots of rest.
- Do not drive.
- Keep the bandage over the puncture area (where the needle went in).
- Keep the bandage dry. Do not take a shower or a bath. You may take a sponge bath, but don't get the bandage wet.
- Do not swim.

24 to 48 hours after procedure

- Continue to rest. Limit physical activity.
- You may drive.
- Take off the bandage. You may see a small amount of dried blood or a bruise.
- You may shower
- Do not take a bath or swim.

48 to 72 hours after procedure

- You may take a bath or swim as you wish.
- Slowly return to your daily activities as long as they feel good to you.

Pain

You may feel extra pain for the first one to two weeks after the procedure. This is because the rhizotomy irritated the muscles, tissues, and nerves.

You may need more pain medication to manage the pain during this time. Your doctor may give you a prescription for more pain medication. Please follow the instructions on the prescription to make sure you take the right amount at the right time.

When to seek medical attention:

Call **9-1-1** or go to the nearest **emergency department** if you:

- Have trouble breathing.
- See a lot of blood through your bandage.
- Have a fever, chills, see discharge (pus) or redness around the procedure site. These could be signs of an infection.
- Feel weak, confused or unwell.
- Feel new pain or pain that you cannot control with the medications that usually help your pain.
- Feel numbness around your genitals or aren't able to control your bowel or bladder.
- Have weakness in your legs or arms that does not go away.
- Notice changes to your eyesight.
- Have severe dizziness, headaches or seizures.
- Have any symptoms of acute stroke (FAST):



Contact information

For non-urgent concerns about the procedure, contact:

Santanu Chakraborty, MD

Staff Physician - Department of Medical Imaging
Diagnostic Neuroradiologist, The Ottawa Hospital
Tel: 613.798.5555 - Ext. 16104 or 14831 (Administrative Assistant Mr.

Ghyslain Rieux)

Tel: 613.798.5555 - Ext. 17770 (Administrative Assistant Ms. Angela Shaw)

Thanh Nguyen, MD

Staff Physician - Department of Medical Imaging

Diagnostic Neuroradiologist, The Ottawa Hospital

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 16104 or 14831 (Administrative Assistant Mr.

Ghyslain Rieux)

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 17770 (Administrative Assistant Ms. Angela Shaw)

Eduardo Portela de Oliveira, MD

Neuroradiologist | The Ottawa Hospital

Assistant Professor | University of Ottawa

Clinician Investigator | Ottawa Hospital Research Institute

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 16104 or 14831 (Administrative Assistant Mr.

Ghyslain Rieux)

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 17770 (Administrative Assistant Ms. Angela Shaw)

Nader Zakhari, MD

Staff Physician - Department of Medical Imaging

Diagnostic Neuroradiologist, The Ottawa Hospital

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 16104 or 14831 (Administrative Assistant Mr.

Ghyslain Rieux)

Tel: 613.798.5555 ext. 17770 (Administrative Assistant Ms. Angela Shaw)