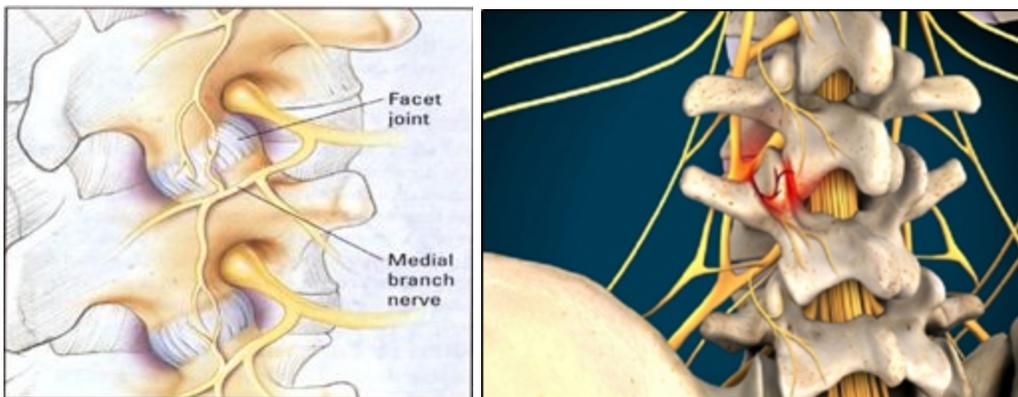


## Cervical, Thoracic, and Lumbar Facet Radiofrequency Ablation

We suspect your pain is stemming from a facet joint(s). Facet joints exist between every single vertebrae in your body - all the way from skull to butt-bone (sacrum). Facet joints allow for mobility of your spine as all other parts of the vertebral column are fused, solid bones. The pain generated from a facet joint is carried to your brain via **medial branch nerves**. Medial branch nerves serve no other function than pain signaling, e.g. do not carry motor signals which are responsible for movement/muscle strength.



To confirm your pain is coming from a facet joint, we perform a test called a **diagnostic medial branch block**. With x-ray guidance, a small needle is placed at the levels of the medial branch nerves corresponding to the facet joint(s) where you are feeling pain. Numbing medication (local anesthetic) is then injected to surround the medial branch nerves. A 'pain diary' is given to determine whether the numbing medication significantly relieved your pain. You are encouraged to engage in activity that would normally result in pain on the day of your procedure. Remember, this is only a test. This diagnostic test of the medial branch nerve(s) will need to be done twice, on two separate days. You will need to return your diary online, by fax, or in person.





If results from the tests are good, you will qualify for a **radiofrequency ablation**. This procedure is the actual treatment and not a test. In this procedure, a needle is again placed next to the medial branch nerve. The needle is connected to a machine that will heat the needle tip resulting in lesioning (a small burn) of the medial branch nerve. As radiofrequency needles heat up and are larger than those used for the diagnostic block, you will be given sedation through an I.V. Therefore, you will need a driver on day of ablation. The nerve can remain lesioned for up to 1.5 years and significantly reduce pain during this timeframe. If pain returns, the ablation can be repeated without having to perform any further diagnostic testing.