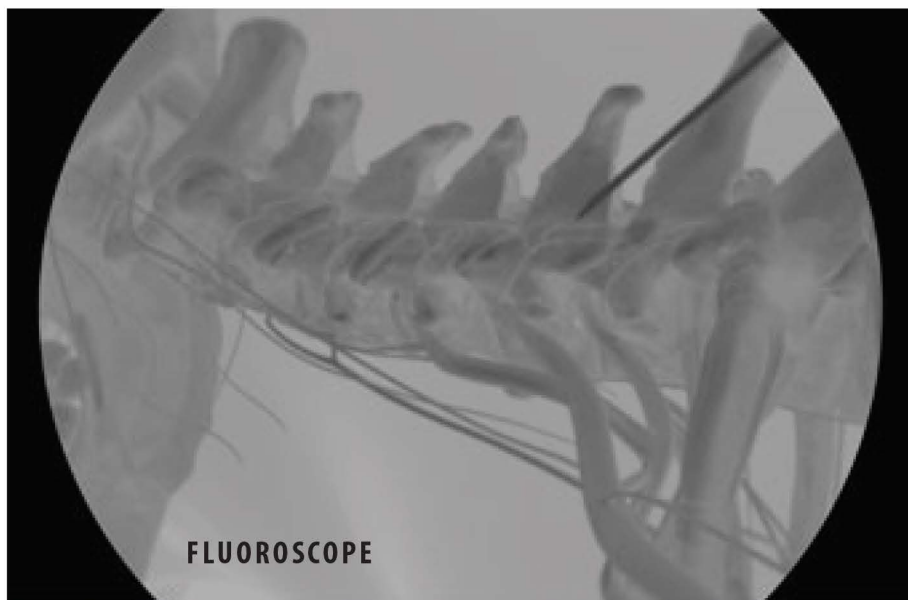




Cervical Facet Joint (Medial Branch) Radiofrequency Ablation / Thermocoagulation / Neurotomy



Overview

This procedure uses heat from radio waves to treat painful facet joints in your neck. It eases pain that isn't helped by medications or physical therapy.

Preparation

To begin, you lie on your stomach. You may be given medicine to relax you. We numb the skin and tissue of your neck. Next, we guide a tube called a "cannula" to your spine. A video x-ray device called a "fluoroscope" helps guide the tube to the medial branch nerves. These tiny nerves carry pain signals from your facet joints to your brain.

Treating the nerves

Now, we push an electrode through the cannula and down to these nerves. We test its position with a weak jolt of energy to assure it is safely and optimally positioned. Then, we inject numbing medicine through the cannula so you don't feel the next phase. After the numbing medicine has kicked in, we heat the nerves with radio waves. Heating them blocks their ability to carry pain signals. We may need to treat several nerves.

End of procedure

When it's done, you get a small bandage on your skin. You're watched in a recovery room for a brief time. Then, you can go home. You may feel sore, and you may still have neck pain. But you'll gradually feel pain relief. This can take several weeks.

