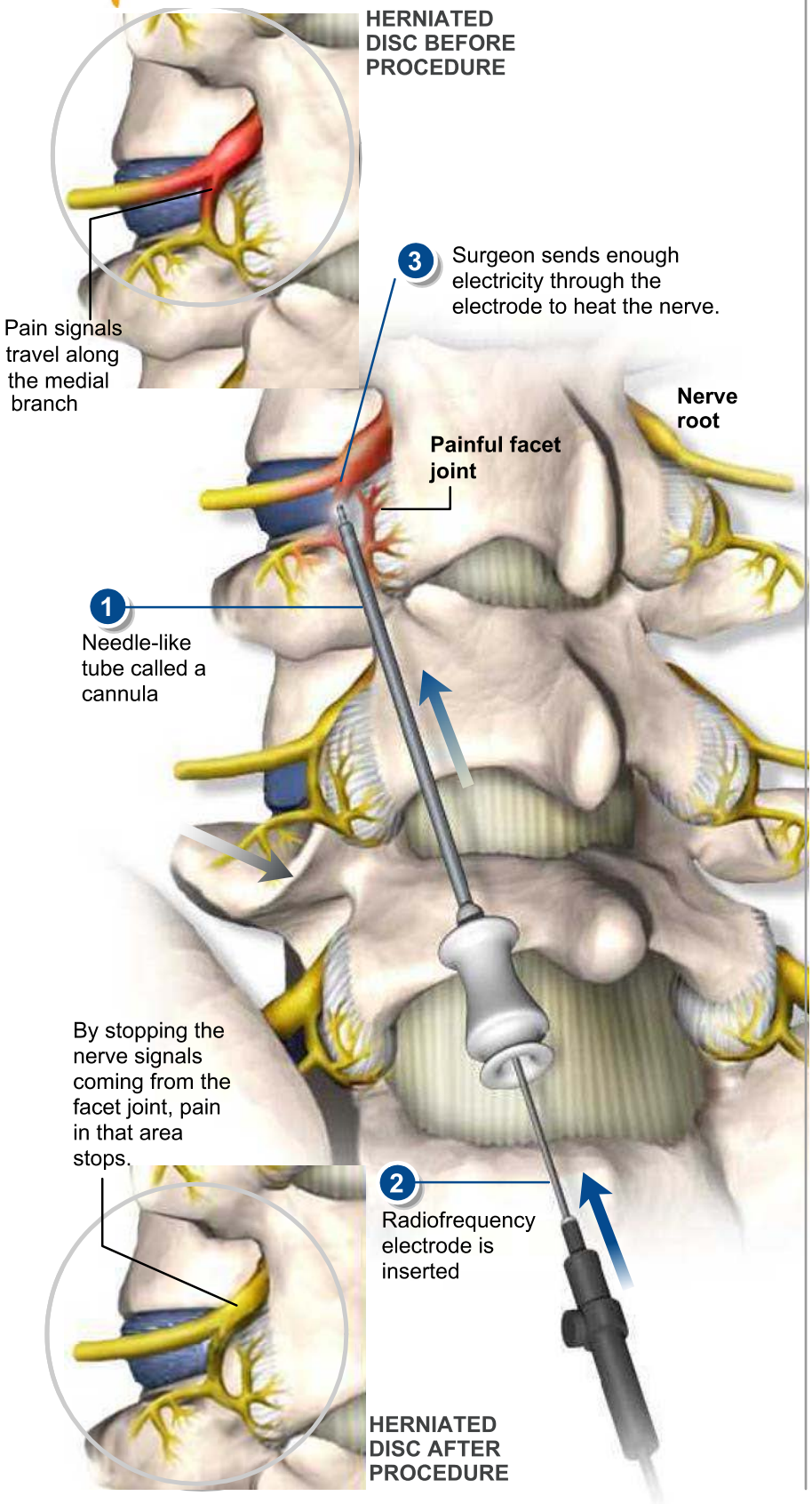
773-296-7937

Lumbar Radiofrequency Neurotomy



OVERVIEW

Also called radiofrequency (RF) rhizotomy, this procedure is done to reduce or stop pain in the spinal facets. A slight electric current is used to cut the nerves serving the painful facet joints. This short, minimally invasive procedure is done with local anesthetic.

Step 1

A needle-like tube called a cannula is inserted and positioned near the targeted medial branch. An x-ray or fluoroscope is used to help position the cannula properly.

STEP 2

A radiofrequency electrode is inserted down the cannula. To make sure it is in the right location, a small amount of electricity stimulates the area. If the stimulation recreates the pain without any other muscular effects, the electrode is in the right place.

STEP 3

To cut the nerve, the surgeon sends enough electricity through the electrode to heat the nerve. Once one neurotomy is done, the surgeon may do the same procedure on one or more nerves.

END OF PROCEDURE

After the procedure, the electrode and cannula are removed. An increase in pain may occur for about a week after the procedure, with full relief from pain seen within a month. Successful RF neurotomies can last longer than steroid block injections.

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