

## RF facet treatment

### Introduction

You will soon be coming to Amstelland Hospital for an RF facet treatment. This leaflet provides additional information on this treatment. Be aware that your personal situation may differ from the one described in this leaflet. Lumbar (low back): this treatment is no longer reimbursed by the health insurer.

### What is RF facet treatment?

For RF facet treatment, the nerves are treated with the help of needles and an electric current to the support joints of the spinal column (the so-called 'facet joints'). The goal of the treatment is to reduce pain. The treatment can be performed on the neck, chest or lower back. If your pain symptoms are caused by the spinal column, you may be eligible for an RF treatment in certain cases. RF stands for Radio Frequent current.

### Important to note

Always contact (before your next treatment) the Pain Medicine Department if one of the following applies to you and you have not yet discussed this with the pain specialist. The following information may be important for your treatment:

- *Use of blood-thinning medication*  
The pain specialist will discuss with you whether, and how long in advance, you have to stop taking this medication.
- *A (potential) pregnancy*  
X-rays will be taken during this

treatment, and these are potentially harmful to an unborn child.

- *Diabetes*
- *Allergy or hypersensitivity to iodinated contrast agents, iodine, medication or adhesive plaster.*

### The day of the treatment

The treatment will be performed in the treatment rooms, location C 36. From the main entrance, follow the yellow route to the right (31-50).

Upon arrival, you will report on time to the reception desk of the Treatment Centre. You can sit down in the waiting room.

Because X-rays will be taken, anyone accompanying you may not be present during the treatment. Please count on staying at the hospital for roughly an hour. During your treatment, the person accompanying you can use the restaurant in the hall.

### The treatment

You will lie down on a narrow table. Depending on the treatment site, you will lie down either on your stomach or your back. The skin will be numbed at the site of the needle insertion. Aided by radioscopy (direct observation of objects opaque to light using some form of radiant energy), the pain specialist will place the needle into the correct position. An electrical test current is then administered via the tip of the needle. This treatment influences the pain conduction in the nerve root, so that in

many cases the patient will have less pain.

An RF facet denervation is always preceded by a test block with a short-acting anesthetic. If the test block achieves a positive result, a definitive treatment of the facet joints follows with the RF current.

The treatment lasts for approximately fifteen minutes. After the treatment, you will be taken to the Pain Medicine Department. You will remain there for roughly an hour under a nurse's supervision.

### **Complications/side effects**

The following complications or side effects may develop after an RF facet treatment:

- If a small blood vessel is hit during the insertion of the needle, bruising may appear. This bruising can be painful.
- A temporary loss of strength in the legs and/or feet.

### **Going home**

After the treatment, you may not drive yourself on the same day. You must ensure that someone else brings you home.

### **Home again**

During the first two weeks after the treatment, your pain symptoms might worsen. This is only temporary. You can take painkillers (e.g. paracetamol according to the package leaflet).

A plaster will be attached to the site of the needle insertion. You can remove this in the evening or on the following day. At that point, you can shower and bathe again.

The results of the treatment can only be assessed after a few weeks. However, it is quite possible for you to notice a favorable effect sooner. In

some instances, the treatment will need to be repeated.

### **Questions?**

Should you still have questions after reading this leaflet, you can contact the Pain Medicine Outpatient Clinic at +31 (0)20 755 7010.

### **Notes on this leaflet**

If any information in this leaflet is unclear or incomplete, please notify us. You can share your remarks with us via [voorlichting@zha.nl](mailto:voorlichting@zha.nl).