

# Medial Branch Block



## Medial Branch Nerve Blocks

A medial branch nerve block is part of a 2-step diagnostic and treatment approach. During the procedure, an anesthetic is injected near small medial nerves connected to a specific facet joint. Typically several levels of the spine are injected in one procedure.

A medial branch nerve block can provide temporary pain relief but is mostly a diagnostic tool to determine the source of your back pain and the next steps in your treatment plan. You should expect one of the following outcomes:

- **The pain does not go away.** This is a sign the back pain you are experiencing is not a result of facet joint problems.
- **The pain goes away for a few hours but then comes back.** This means the back pain is likely from facet joint problems and your doctor may recommend additional treatment in that area.
- **The pain goes away after the block and stays away for several days.** If your injection included a steroid that reduced inflammation, you may experience relief for a while. This is a sign that you may benefit from further treatment to the facet joint area and medial nerves.
- **The patient experiences a great deal of pain relief.** This is a sign that the facet joint is determined to be the source of pain.

If the pain relief lasts for a duration of time following the injection, the patient may be a candidate for a subsequent procedure known as [radiofrequency ablation](#). The radiofrequency ablation offers longer-term pain relief.

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