

Medial Branch Block

Overview

A Medial Branch Block is an injection of numbing medicine. The medial branch nerves attach to the facet joints of your spine and can hurt when the joints are injured or diseased. The injection provides temporary pain relief and helps the doctors find the source of your pain.

Preparation

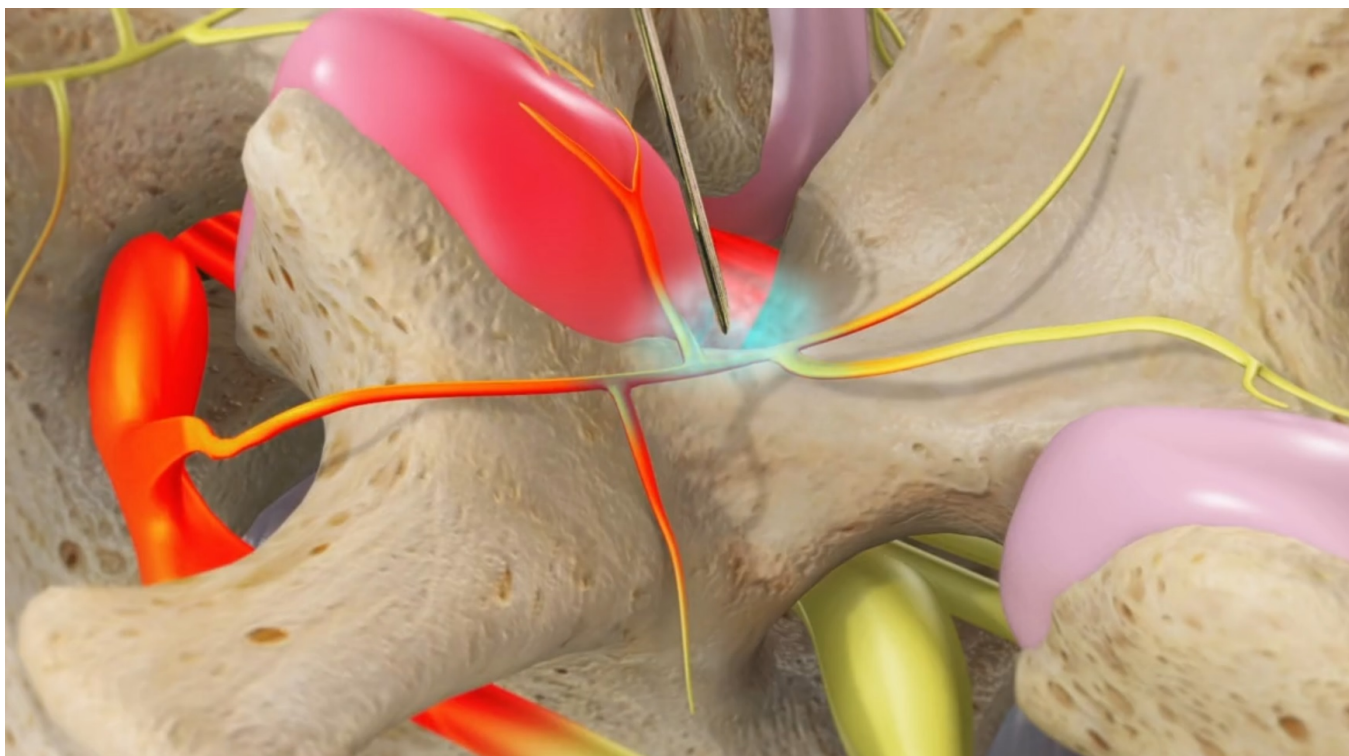
To begin, you are given local anesthesia to numb the skin and tissue around the areas to be injected.

Inserting the needle

Next, your doctor uses a video x-ray device called a fluoroscope to guide a thin needle through the numbed tissue down to your medial branch nerves. Contrast dye is used to confirm correct needle placement.

Injection

Then, the doctor injects numbing medicine onto the nerves. If this area is the source of your pain, you'll feel immediate relief. Your doctor may need to do this injection at more than one level of your spine.



End of procedure

When the procedure is finished, you'll be monitored briefly and then discharged to go home. You may feel pain relief for the next few hours. Your doctor may ask you to keep track of your pain level as the medicine wears off. If the block succeeded by finding the source of your pain, your doctor will recommend a different procedure to provide long-lasting relief.