

RF or PRF treatment

Introduction

You will soon be coming to Amstelland Hospital for an RF or PRF treatment. This leaflet provides additional information on these treatments. Be aware that your personal situation may differ from the one described in this leaflet.

What is an RF or PRF treatment for a nerve root?

As part of these treatments, the nerve root is treated with a fine needle and a light electric current. The goal of the treatment is to reduce pain. If your pain is caused by your spinal column, and it radiates to your head, arm, trunk or leg, you may be eligible for an RF or PRF treatment. RF stands for Radio Frequency current and PRF stands for Pulse Radio Frequency current. Often, you will first undergo a trial treatment to determine whether this will be useful in your case.

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. Then the skin will be numbed with a local anesthetic where the needle will be inserted. Aided by radioscopy (direct observation of objects opaque to light using some form of radiant energy), the pain specialist will insert the needle. Once this needle is correctly positioned, test currents are sent through its tip. You will then need to indicate when you feel something. This treatment affects the pain conduction in the nerve root; in many cases there is a reduction in pain.

The pain specialist may decide on a combination treatment whereby, in addition to the PRF current, medication is also injected into the nerve root. The medication consists of an anesthetic and an anti-inflammatory agent.

The treatment lasts for approximately ten 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 RF or PRF treatment of a nerve root.

- If a small blood vessel is hit during the insertion of the needle, bruising may appear. This bruising can be painful.
- Decreased sensitivity can occur in the skin surrounding the treated nerve root. Very rarely, there is a loss of strength in an arm or a leg. The decreased sensation and the loss of strength are only temporary, lasting from one to a few days.
- While inserting a needle into the chest and ribs, the lung membrane can be hit, causing a collapsed lung. The treatment is implemented with caution. Nevertheless, there is a slight possibility of this complication occurring. In case of a larger collapsed lung, a hospital admission may be required to administer the proper treatment.

Attention!

If an anti-inflammatory agent is injected, the contraceptive pill will not be reliable until the next menstrual period!

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.