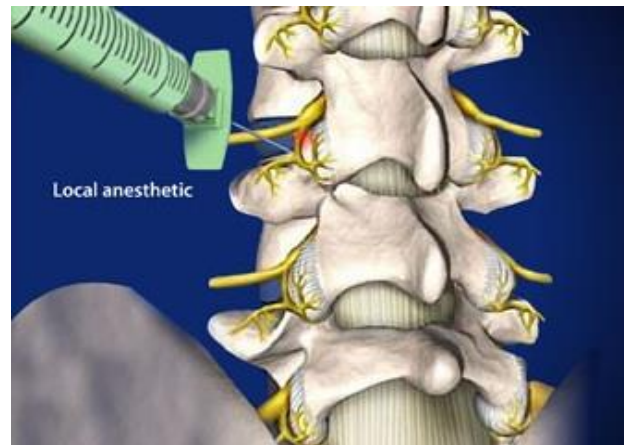
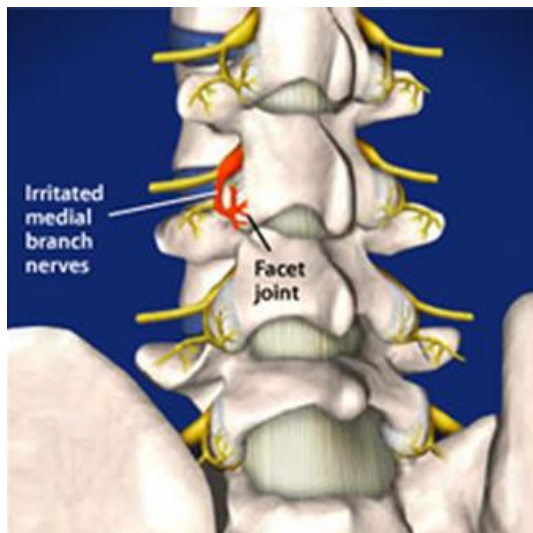




## Medial Branch Nerve Blocks

Medial branch nerves are small nerves feed out from the facet joints in the spine and carry pain signals from the facet joints to the brain.



The medial branch block is often used as part of a 2-step diagnostic and treatment approach:

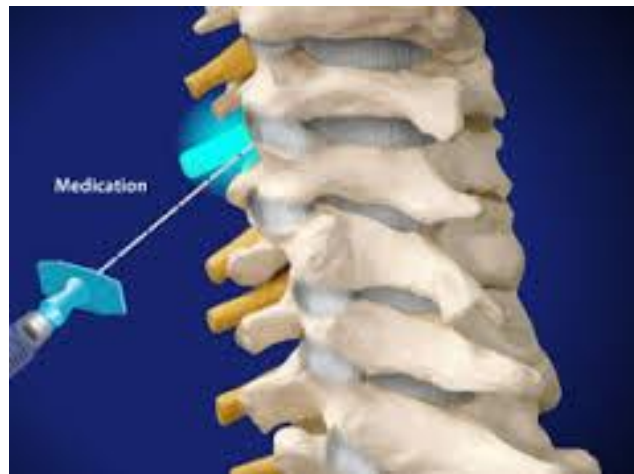
### I. **Role of a Medial Branch Block**

A medial branch nerve block is a procedure in which 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.

If the patient experiences marked pain relief immediately after the injection, then the facet joint is determined to be the source of the patient's pain.

- See [Facet Joint Disorders and Back Pain](#)

The procedure is primarily diagnostic, meaning that if the patient has the appropriate duration of pain relief after the medial branch nerve block, then he or she may be a candidate for a subsequent procedure - called a *medial branch radiofrequency ablation*- for longer term pain relief.



### **Role of a Medial Branch Radiofrequency Neurotomy (Ablation)**

In cases where a medial branch nerve block has confirmed that a patient's pain originates from a facet joint, a radiofrequency ablation can be considered for longer term pain relief.

A radiofrequency ablation is a type of injection procedure in which a heat lesion is created on the nerve that transmits the pain signal to the brain. The goal of a radiofrequency ablation is to interrupt the pain signal to the brain, while preserving other functions, such as normal sensation and muscle strength.