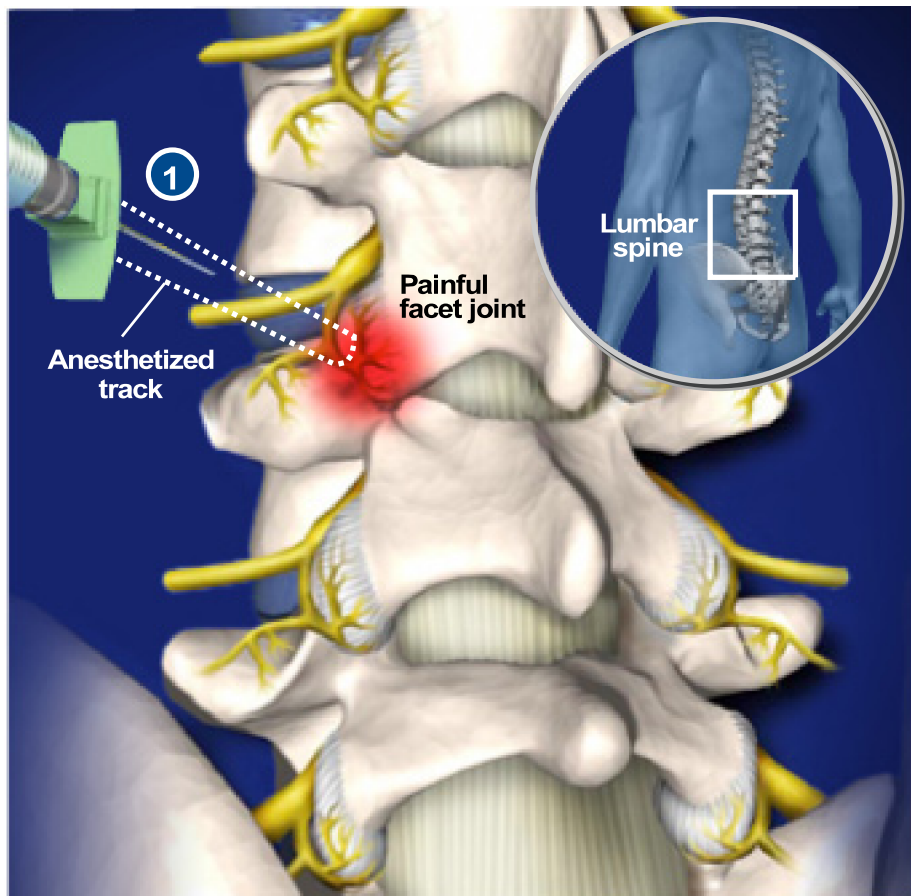


MEDIAL BRANCH BLOCK



Overview

This diagnostic procedure is performed to determine if a specific facet joint is the source of a patient's pain. During the procedure, an injection is administered to block the nerves serving the painful facet joints.

1. Preparation

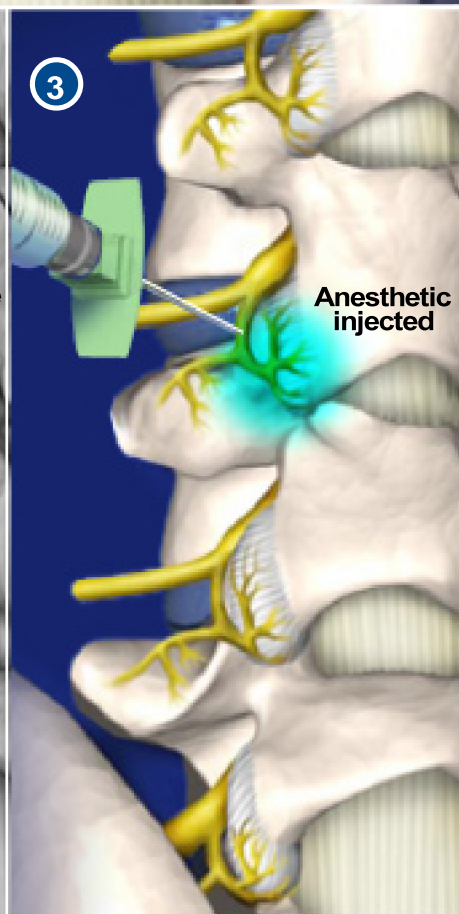
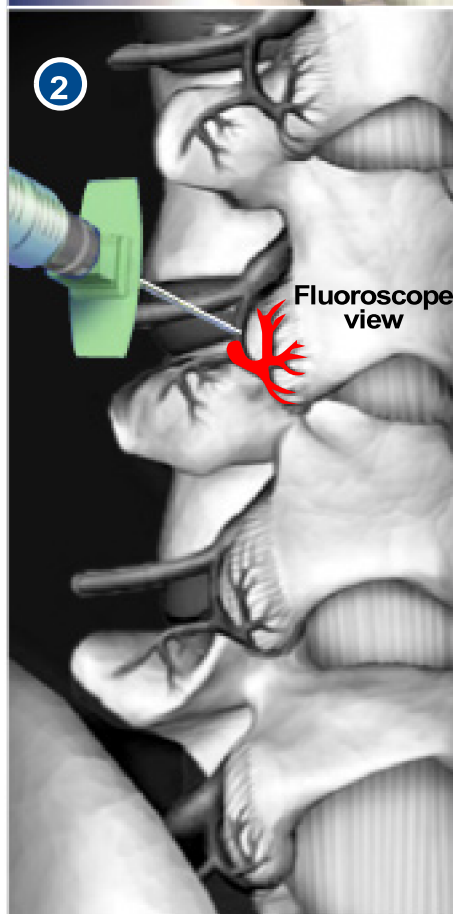
Patients lie on their stomach on a table equipped with a special x-ray (fluoroscopic) unit. A local anesthetic numbs the skin and all the tissue down to the medial branch.

2. Contrast Dye Injected

The physician slides a needle through the anesthetized track. A contrast solution is injected so the physician can use an x-ray (fluoroscope) to see the painful areas and to confirm the correct location of the needle tip.

3. Anesthetic Injected

Next, anesthetic medicine is injected around the nerves to block pain signals from reaching the brain.



End of Procedure

If there is no significant relief, another level may be treated to see if that is the source of pain. If the pain improves soon after the procedure, an injection providing more long-term relief may be performed at that level.