

What is the purpose of this procedure?

A Racz catheter procedure (occasionally called epidural adhesiolysis) is used to free nerves from scar tissue in the spine. The Racz Catheter was named after a doctor named Gabor Racz who developed it. He found it effective for treating back pain related scar tissue formation. This scar tissue (or adhesions) may develop because of chronic inflammation (continuous swelling), irritation, or following surgery. The scar tissue can then irritate nearby spinal nerve roots causing pain radiating from the back to the legs. Freeing the nerves may reduce pain and allow medications to reach irritated nerves.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

The risks are infrequent. They include:

- Allergic reaction to medication
- Nerve damage (spinal cord and nerve roots)
- Bleeding and bruising at the injection site
- Pain at the injection site or during the injection
- Infection
- Puncture of the sac surrounding the spinal cord (dura mater)
- Injection of medication into a blood vessel or spinal fluid
- No improvement or worsening of your pain in some cases
- Steroid injections may cause a temporary increase in blood sugar, especially in diabetics

How should I prepare for the procedure?

- You must have a driver with you at the time of check in and check out. Your driver must accompany you to the clinic for your procedure. You can be discharged only to the care of a responsible adult driver 18 or older.

- It is important that you do not eat within 6 hours before the procedure. Small amounts of clear liquids are ok up to 2 hours before the procedure. If you have diabetes discuss your eating and medication schedule with your doctor.
- You may need to stop taking certain medications several days before the procedure. Please remind the doctor of all prescription and over-the-counter medications you take, including herbal and vitamin supplements. The doctor will tell you if and when you need to discontinue the medications.
- It is very important to tell the doctor if you have asthma or had an allergic reaction to the injected dye for a previous radiology exam (CT scan, angiogram, etc). An allergic reaction has symptoms such as hives, itchiness, difficulty breathing, or any treatment which required hospital stay.
- Tell the doctor if you develop a cold, fever, or flu symptoms before your scheduled appointment, or if you have started taking antibiotics for an infection.

What will happen during the procedure?

The procedure is performed on an outpatient basis in a special procedure room equipped with a special x-ray called a fluoroscope. In the pre-procedure area the nurse or doctor will place an IV line. This is used for fluids and sedation.

1. When you get to the procedure room for your safety and comfort you will be connected to monitoring equipment (EKG monitor, blood pressure cuff, and blood oxygen monitoring device), and positioned on your stomach.
2. Your back and buttocks are cleansed with an antiseptic soap after which the doctor injects numbing medicine into your skin, this will cause a burning sensation for a few seconds.
3. The doctor will locate a small opening at the base of the tailbone (sacrum). A needle is directed through this opening. Contrast dye will be injected to show the areas with scar tissue.

4. The Racz catheter is then placed through the needle and directed to the area of scarring. Steroid and anesthetic solution is then injected.

What should I do after the procedure?

After the procedure you will be taken to the recovery area for 20-30 minutes. Most people experience immediate benefit following the injection, but we encourage you to rest as much as possible the rest of the day. Avoid lifting heavy objects (groceries, children) and physical exertion or straining. You may slowly resume your usual activities the following day.

If you would like further information including videos of procedures, please visit our website: <http://www.umpain.com/>

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