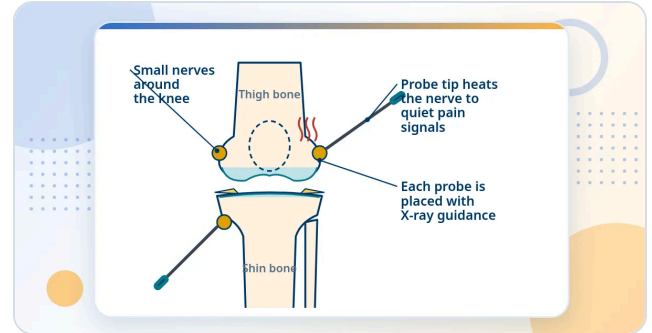


Genicular nerve RFA (knee)

The genicular nerves are small nerves that carry pain signals from the knee. Genicular nerve radiofrequency ablation, or RFA, uses gentle heat from radio waves to calm these nerves so they send fewer pain signals. First, a test called a genicular nerve block checks whether these nerves are carrying your pain. RFA does not repair the knee, and results vary.

At GSMC: all GSMC providers evaluate patients and help decide which options may fit, at any of our 7 offices. Results vary.



What it is

RFA, also called radiofrequency neurotomy, places thin needles next to the genicular nerves around the knee. A small electrode heats the nerve tissue to interrupt pain signals. Some systems use "cooled" radiofrequency, which can treat a slightly larger area.

RFA targets only the small sensory nerves. It does not affect the muscles that move your knee. Nerves can grow back over time, so pain may return, and the procedure can often be repeated if it helped.

Who it may help

Genicular nerve RFA may help people who have:

- Chronic knee pain from osteoarthritis that has not improved enough with therapy, medicines or injections
- People who are not ready for, or are not good candidates for, knee replacement
- Clear short-term relief from a test genicular nerve block

What to expect

Step 1: The test block. 1. The skin is numbed. Using X-ray or ultrasound guidance, your physician places a thin needle near each of the genicular nerves (usually three or more) and injects a small amount of numbing medicine. 2. Over the next several hours, you do activities that usually hurt and track your pain in a diary. 3. If your pain clearly improves while the numbing medicine works, RFA may help.

Step 2: Radiofrequency ablation. 1. On a separate day, you lie on a table and the skin is numbed. Light sedation may be offered. 2. Using X-ray guidance, thin RF needles are placed next to each target nerve. 3. Before heating, a test may be done to make sure the needles are in a safe spot. 4. The nerves are treated with gentle heat. This usually takes about 30 to 60 minutes in total. 5. You rest briefly and go home the same day with a driver.

Recovery

- Soreness, bruising or a burning feeling around the knee can last one to two weeks.
- Some people have a patch of numb skin near the knee for a while.
- Relief, if it happens, often builds over a few weeks. It may last months, and sometimes longer.
- Staying active and keeping up with exercise may help you get the most from treatment.

Is it right for me?

May not be a good fit: people with an infection in or near the knee, a loose or failing knee implant, a bleeding problem or blood thinners that cannot be safely paused, certain implanted electrical devices (which may need special planning), or pregnancy. Pain after knee replacement should be checked for infection or implant problems first. People who did not get relief from the test block are less likely to benefit.

Risks

Risks include soreness, bruising, bleeding, infection, temporary numbness or burning of the skin around the knee, and, rarely, nerve injury or skin burn. Pain may not improve, and it can come back as the nerves regrow. We will review your specific risks.

Other options

Other options may include physical therapy, weight management, bracing, medicines, steroid or hyaluronic acid (gel) injections, PRP (usually self-pay), peripheral nerve stimulation or a referral to discuss knee replacement.

Questions people ask

Why do I need a test block first? The test block numbs the genicular nerves for a few hours. If your

pain clearly improves, RFA is more likely to help.

How long does genicular RFA last? It varies. For some people relief lasts months, and sometimes longer. Nerves can grow back, so the procedure may be repeated if it helped.

Will it weaken my knee? RFA targets small sensory nerves, not the nerves that control the knee muscles.

Can I have genicular RFA after a knee replacement? For some people, yes. We first make sure the pain is not from an infection or a problem with the implant.

Insurance and cost

GSMD participates with all Aetna plans, including Aetna HMO, and many other plans. Coverage depends on your plan and may need prior authorization. Our team checks your benefits before treatment.

When to call us: fever or chills; redness, swelling or drainage where a needle or device was placed; new or worse pain, numbness or weakness. **Call 911** for chest pain, trouble breathing, or sudden loss of bladder or bowel control.

Call 732-202-3000

One number for all 7 GSMD offices:

Toms River · 1314 Hooper Ave, 1st Floor

Brick · 1608 NJ-88, Suite 102

Whiting · 1100 NJ-70, Entrance B

Barnegat · 249 S Main St, Suite 5

Manahawkin · 1109 Beacon Ave

Freehold · 322 Professional View Dr, 300 Bldg, 2nd Fl

West Long Branch · 100 NJ-36, Suite 1K

gsmedicalcenter.org/treatments/genicular-nerve-radiofrequency-ablation/



General information, not medical advice. Individual results vary, and no outcome can be promised. Illustration is simplified and not to scale. Brand names belong to their owners; GSMD is not affiliated with any manufacturer.