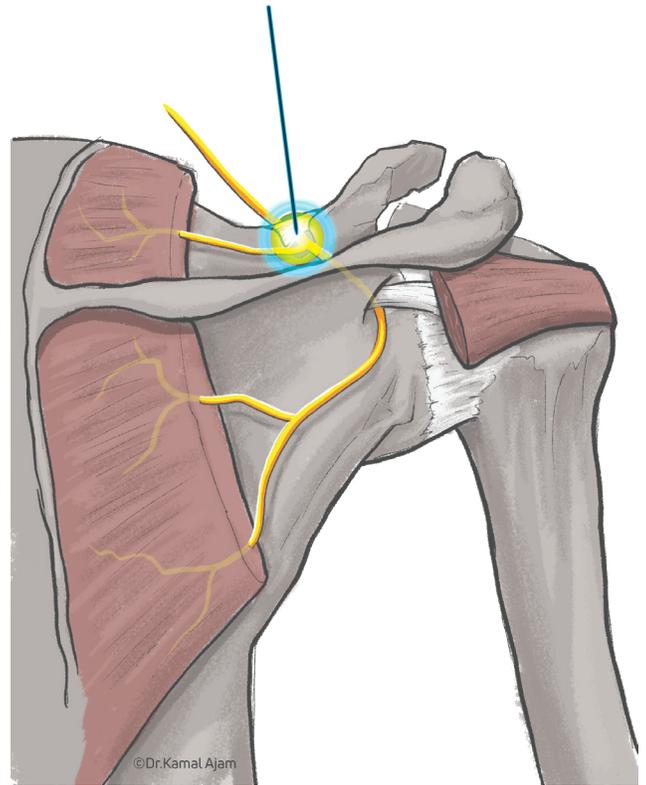# Dr. Ajam | Carolinas Pain Institute

Radiofrequency Ablation of the Suprascapular Nerve

©Dr.Kamal Ajam

You have been diagnosed with chronic shoulder pain, likely related to osteoarthritis. Radiofrequency ablation is a safe, non-surgical pain management technique that we offer at Carolinas Pain Institute. The procedure involves using X-ray guidance to place an ablation needle near the small nerve that supplies sensation to the shoulder joint. Once the probe is in position, we use radiofrequency waves to heat the tissue surrounding the probe tip. This allows us to ablate, or "burn" the nerves that transmit pain coming from your arthritic shoulder joint.

The first step we must take before you are considered a candidate for a radiofrequency ablation procedure is **two sets of diagnostic nerve blocks**. This involves injecting a small amount of local anesthetic medication at the sites of the nerve. We expect to see a **few hours of pain relief** after these injections, and if this is achieved after **two sets of nerve blocks**, we may then move forward with the ablation procedure.

FAQs

What is the recovery going to be like?

Oftentimes, patients are sore for the first couple of days after the procedure. Occasionally this soreness can last as long as a couple of weeks. This is typically manageable with ice, ibuprofen, or Tylenol.

How long does it last?

Patients can expect 6-12 months of pain relief from the procedure. Eventually, the nerves we ablate do grow back, and if your pain returns, we may discuss repeating the procedure at that time.

Will this cure my shoulder pain?

The goal of this procedure is to eliminate the majority of the pain coming from the arthritis in your shoulder. It will not cure the arthritis, but will reduce your ability to feel pain from the arthritic joint.

How often can I have this procedure done?

Every six months, but we hope to obtain even longer lasting relief than this.

You are "burning" my nerves. Will it hurt?

We use a generous amount of local anesthetic to numb the area prior to any ablation. This procedure is generally very well tolerated.