

Intradiscal Electrothermal Therapy (IDET)



Overview

This is a treatment for chronic pain in your lower back. The physician uses heat to reduce the sensitivity of nerve fibers in a spinal disc. More than one disc may be treated.

Preparation

In preparation for this procedure, you lie face down. You are given medicine that helps you relax. The skin of your lower back is numbed. With the help of a video x-ray device called a "fluoroscope", the physician inserts a needle into your lower back. The needle is carefully guided into the spinal disc that is causing your pain. The physician inserts a thin wire called an "electrothermal catheter" through the needle and into the disc.

Disc Wall Treated

The catheter is positioned against the painful part of the disc. The physician slowly heats this wire. It warms the disc wall. The heat can thicken the fibers of the wall, causing small tears to shrink. The heating process also reduces the sensitivity of tiny nerve fibers in the disc wall. If multiple levels of your spine are painful, the physician will repeat this process for other discs.

End of Procedure and Aftercare

When the procedure is complete, your skin is bandaged. You will be monitored for a brief time and then allowed to go home. You may temporarily feel an increase in pain after the procedure. This will gradually get better during the following months. You may benefit from physical therapy as you heal. Your healthcare provider will give you instructions to help your recovery.