

# NON-SURGICAL ORTHOPAEDIC & SPINE CENTER, P.C.

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Volume 9, Issue 1

## IntraDiscal ElectroThermal (IDET) Therapy

Welcome to the new format for our newsletter.

In our ninth year, we continue to redesign our newsletter to provide an easier to read format with more colors and pictures. We are constantly trying to improve our presentation, and welcome any suggestions on future topics of interest.

We continue to strive for excellence when it comes to the non-surgical treatment for back pain and other orthopaedic injuries. Please visit our Patient Education Center and check out our web site:

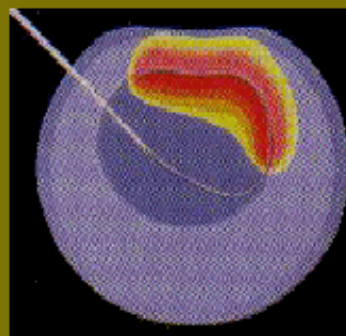
[lowbackpain.com](http://lowbackpain.com)

IntraDiscal ElectroThermal (IDET) Therapy is a promising advance in the treatment of back pain. Low back pain has many causes including: arthritis, degenerative disc disease, disc herniation or bulge, facet or sacroiliac joint problems, and muscular or soft tissue dysfunction. IDET is a specific therapy for disc problems.

With injury or even normal aging, a disruption or a fissure of the disc wall (called annulus fibrosis) may occur. The disc itself is lined with small nerve endings. When a disc is inflamed or injured, these nerves send pain signals to the brain. The inner disc tissue (called nucleus pulposus) may protrude into this fissure and also cause pain.

IDET is a minimally invasive procedure where heat is applied to the affected disc wall. The thermal energy contracts and thickens the collagen of the disc wall. The heat results in a closure of the

fissure or a reduction in the bulge of the inner disc material. IDET works specifically for disc tissue, and has no known effect on joints, bones, or spinal nerve roots.



### IDET catheter heating disc

As with any therapy, it is important to correctly identify patients who can benefit from IDET. Typically a test called discography is performed prior to IDET. Discography is an outpatient procedure where dye is injected into the disc under fluoroscopic visualization. It identifies the pain-generating disc(s), which will therefore lead to the best treatment.

IDET is also performed as an outpatient procedure. After

intravenous sedation and local anesthesia, a small needle is inserted into the disc under X-ray. A small wire with a special heating element is then inserted through the needle and into the disc. Heat is then applied to the disc for a specific amount of time. The procedure typically takes 30 to 45 minutes.

Most patients report only mild discomfort with the IDET procedure. It is important to protect the back while the disc heals. Usually a semi-rigid corset is worn for 3 months. A specific physical therapy protocol begins at about three months after the procedure. Improvement in back pain typically begins at one month, and the long term results are excellent.

Thousands of patients have achieved significant long term improvement with IDET. Our physicians can best guide you as to whether the IDET is appropriate for you.

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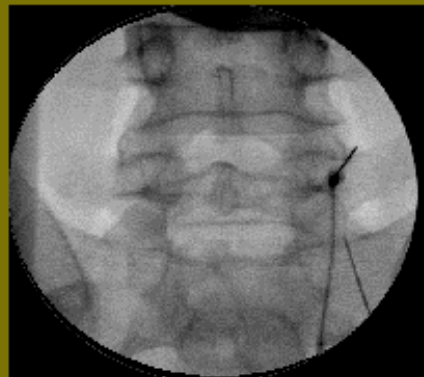
## Radiofrequency Lesioning for Neck and Back Pain

Radiofrequency (RF) lesioning is a safe way to interrupt pain signals for Facet Joint Pain. Facet joints are located in the neck and back, and with injury they can cause pain.

Typically facet joints can be injected with anesthetic and/or cortisone under X-ray (Fluoroscopic) guidance. The nerves that receive input from facet joints (called medial branch nerves) can be "blocked" with local anesthetic. If a facet joint injection or medial branch block relieves pain temporarily, RF lesioning of the medial branch nerves can provide more permanent pain relief by interrupting pain signals from the joint(s).

RF lesioning is performed by the physician in an outpatient surgical center, where special equipment can be used. Local anesthetic and a mild sedative are used to reduce

any discomfort during the procedure. Patients need to be awake so the exact level(s) of the nerves can be localized. The number of levels "blocked" is usually determined ahead of time and based on X-rays, MRI's and a physical examination.



**Lesion of the L-5 medial branch nerve**

Once the needle is near the target area, a tiny electrical stimulus is

given, which produces a "tingling" sensation and a "twitch." This step is necessary for precise location of the needle, and minimizes the risk of placement near other nerves or tissues.

After the exact location is determined, either a continuous or pulsed RF current travels through the electrode and into the nerve. This current helps to "block" the pain signals. The procedure typically takes less than one hour to perform. Patients are monitored for approximately 30 minutes, and then discharged home. Pain relief can be noted as early as one week after the procedure, and may improve up to three weeks.

The RF treatment usually blocks pain signals for several months. The human body can regenerate pain pathways over time, so RF lesioning may safely be repeated if necessary.

## Procedures Performed by Our Physicians

Electrodiagnostic testing (EMG/NCS)

Cervical, Thoracic, and Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injections

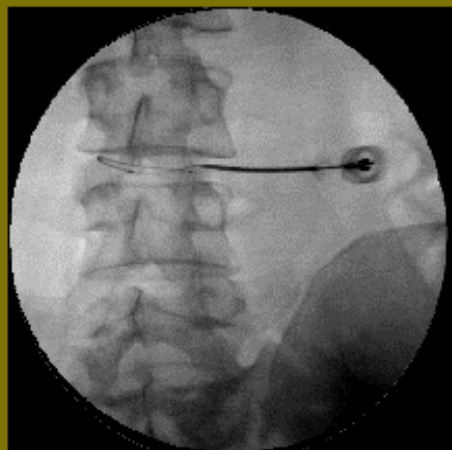
Transforaminal Selective Nerve Root Injections

Cervical, Thoracic, and Lumbar Facet Injections

Lumbar Sympathetic Nerve Block

Cervical and Lumbar Radiofrequency Lesioning

Medical Acupuncture



**IDET catheter in the L3-4 disc**

IntraDiscal Electrothermal Therapy

Lumbar Spinal Endoscopy

Lumbar/Thoracic Discography

Joint and Trigger Point Injections

Botox Injections

Independent Medical Evaluations

Ergonomic Assessments

Impairment and Disability Evaluations

## Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an ancient method of encouraging the body to promote healing and to improve function. The Chinese theory is that channels of energy run in regular patterns throughout the body, called *meridians*. These meridians flow through the body and nourish the tissues. Pain and many diseases disrupt the flow of energy to specific parts of the body. The meridians can be influenced by needling specific acupuncture points. Inserting needles and applying heat or electrical stimulation at precise acupuncture points can reestablish regular flow through the body.

Modern science believes that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemicals can change the experience of pain, and can trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones that influence the body's

internal regulating system. This improved energy and biochemical balance results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, and promotes physical and emotional well-being.

*Medical acupuncture* is performed by a physician trained in Western medicine, who has also had training in traditional Chinese acupuncture. Medical acupuncture is a system which can influence three areas of health care: promotion of health and well-being, prevention of illness, and treatment of numerous medical conditions.



The World Health Organization recognizes the use of acupuncture in the treatment of a wide range of medical problems:

- ◆ Digestive Disorders

- ◆ Respiratory disorders: sinusitis, bronchitis, asthma, recurrent chest infections.
- ◆ **Neurological and muscular disorders:** headaches, facial tics, neck and back pain, neuritis, tendonitis, sciatica, and osteoarthritis.
- ◆ Urinary, menstrual, and reproductive problems
- ◆ **Smoking cessation.**

The number of treatments needed differs from person to person. For complicated or long standing conditions, one or two treatments per week for several months may be required. For acute problems, usually fewer visits are necessary. For health maintenance, four sessions a year typically is sufficient. In recent years, acupuncture has become more common in traditional medical practice. Dr. Weil is trained in medical acupuncture, and can discuss the benefits to you, by appointment.

## Our Physicians



Arnold J. Weil, M.D.



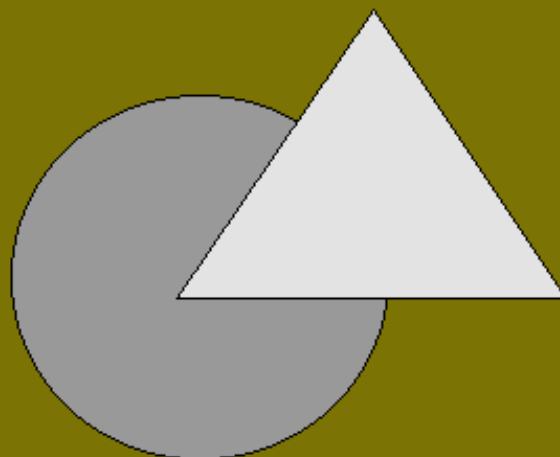
Anthony R. Grasso, M.D.



Brian R. Carter, M.D.

**Did You Know . . .**

- ◆ Brian R. Carter, M.D. joined our practice in August, 2001. Dr. Carter completed his residency training at the University of Virginia. He specializes in pain management and sports medicine.
- ◆ Arnold J. Weil, M.D. has been performing Medical Acupuncture for over 2 years. Dr. Weil has had tremendous success treating back and neck pain, as well as with smoking cessation.
- ◆ Our website **www.lowbackpain.com** has been redesigned to provide the most recent information in *non-surgical* orthopaedic care.
- ◆ We have satellite offices in:  
Woodstock  
Lawrenceville  
Carrollton  
and soon in Atlanta



**Our Main Facility**

**Non-Surgical Orthopaedic & Spine Center, P.C.**  
335 Roselane Street  
Marietta, Georgia 30060  
770.421.1420 phone  
770.421.8055 fax

**We are participating providers for the following insurance plans:**

Aetna PPO/ HMO/ POS  
Affiliated Healthcare  
Affordable  
AHI Healthcare Systems  
America's Health Plan  
Amercaid  
Beech Street of Florida  
(Mutual of Omaha  
Companies)  
BellSouth (FXB only)  
Blue Cross/Blue Shield  
Blue Choice PPO  
Preferred Care GA  
Federal Employees  
(all plans except Blue  
Choice HMO)  
Capp Care  
Champus

Cigna PPO  
HMO (out of network)  
Comp First  
Community Care Network  
Cor Care / Corvel  
Core Source  
Cost Care  
First Health  
(Healthcare Compare  
& Affordable )  
Focus Healthcare  
Fortis  
Georgia 1st  
Great West Life  
Guardian Life  
Health Advantage  
Network  
Healthsource HMO/  
PPO/POS

HealthStar Manged Care  
AffordaCare  
Humana Military  
John Hancock  
Kaiser  
Managed Care, Inc.  
Medicare/Medicare SMART  
Medview  
Metrahealth  
Morgan Health Grp  
Multiplan  
Mutually Preferred  
One Health Plan  
PCA Health Plans  
Principal PPO  
Preferred Health  
Network  
Preferred Plan of Georgia  
Private Healthcare (PHCS)

Promina PPO  
Pronet (Provider  
Network)  
Provident Life &  
Accident  
Southcare  
Special Net  
State Merit  
Travelers  
Tricare Prime  
Unicare  
United Healthcare  
PPO/HMO/POS  
UHC For Srs.  
USA Managed Care  
US Healthcare  
Wellstar

**If you do not see your plan, please ask one of our staff.**

