

FDA panel supports continued testing of pain drugs

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(AP) -- A panel of arthritis experts has recommended that the federal government allow continued testing of an experimental class of pain drugs for arthritis, despite links to bone decay and joint failure

The Food and Drug Administration's 21-member panel of arthritis experts voted unanimously that research on the nerve-blocking drugs should continue, with certain [safety precautions](#) to protect patients. Reports of joint failure led the agency to halt studies of the drugs in 2010.

Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals have asked the FDA to lift the moratorium on testing of their drugs.

"There's clearly a worrisome safety signal, but in spite of that I think there's an unmet need in certain patient populations," said panelist Dr. Sherine Gabriel, of the Mayo Medical School of Rochester of Minnesota.

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