

The tenth thoracic ventral rami pass into the intercostal space between the pleura and internal intercostal membrane (fascia). They then pass below the intercostal vessels in the neurovascular plane between the tenth internal and innermost intercostal muscles below the intercostal vessels. Before reaching the costal angle they give rise to lateral and collateral branches.

The **tenth lateral cutaneous branch** pierces the intercostal and abdominal muscles and superficial fascia obliquely, close to the midaxillary line before dividing into anterior and posterior branches. The anterior branch runs forwards to terminate in the external oblique muscle and overlying skin, while the posterior branch passes back to terminate in the skin overlying latissimus dorsi.

The **tenth anterior cutaneous branch** is the terminal part of the collateral nerve. The collateral nerve follows the inferior border of its intercostal space to pierce the rectus abdominis muscle and the anterior layer of the rectus sheath, where it becomes the tenth anterior cutaneous branch of the thorax and terminates in the overlying skin.

Supply

The tenth lateral cutaneous branch supplies the muscular slips of the external oblique muscle, skin over the tenth intercostal space and adjacent parts of the ninth and eleventh intercostal spaces, and skin of the mid abdomen antero-inferiorly as far as the linea semilunaris. The anterior cutaneous branch supplies the rectus abdominis muscle and skin over the anterior abdominal wall of the tenth intercostal space, of and around the umbilicus.