

CT myelogram

What is it?

A myelogram is a study in which iodinated contrast material (x-ray dye) is instilled into the spinal canal before undergoing a CT scan in order to better demonstrate the discs, nerves, spinal cord and bones in order to determine what is causing your symptoms (usually neck or back pain). The procedure will be performed by a doctor (radiologist) using x-ray guidance.

Before the procedure

Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions that you may have about the procedure. Risks include, but are not limited to, the following: bleeding, infection, discomfort/bruising at the injection site (usually the lower back or neck), nerve/spinal cord damage, headache, seizures and allergic reaction to the iodinated contrast agent. Most complications require only additional observation, although administration of fluids, medications or blood products may rarely be needed. Surgery could be needed if a life-threatening complication is encountered. Spinal cord damage could result in paralysis or death. If you have a headache that lasts longer than 24 hours, please call the radiology nurse or the referring provider as you may need an epidural blood patch for symptom relief.

Myelography may be contraindicated in patients with bleeding disorders, active infection, or allergy to x-ray dye.

You will be asked to sign a consent giving permission to undergo the procedure.

Some medications may increase your chance of a seizure when x-ray dye is administered intrathecally; a list of drugs will be reviewed with you prior to the procedure. Notify the doctor prior to the procedure if you have *any* drug allergies.

Inform the doctor if you have a bleeding disorder or if you take an anticoagulant (blood thinner), aspirin, ibuprofen, or any other medication that may affect blood clotting. In some cases, these medications may need to be temporarily discontinued prior to undergoing this procedure.

During the procedure

You will be placed on your stomach or rolled on your side for the procedure. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution then draped to create a sterile field. Local anesthetic (e.g. lidocaine) will be used to numb the skin and soft tissue. This may cause a brief stinging sensation.

A needle will be inserted through the numbed area and into the spinal canal. You may feel some pressure as the needle is advanced into the appropriate position. Please notify the doctor if you feel any pain radiating into your legs.

A few x-rays will be taken to confirm appropriate location within spinal canal. Once the intrathecal compartment has been accessed, a small amount of x-ray dye will be injected into the spinal canal. A few x-rays will be taken and then you will be transported to the CT scanner for the final part of the exam. Please follow the technologist's directions to keep the dye in the right place prior to the CT.

After the procedure

If you are symptom free after your CT scan, you will be able to leave the radiology department. Please notify the technologist if you are having any symptoms that you feel may be related to today's procedure.

Once you are medically cleared for discharge after the procedure, please make sure someone is available to drive you home.

Rest on your back with the head of the bed elevated ≤ 30 degrees for 6-8 hours after your myelogram; light activity is recommended for the next 24-48 hours.

Drink large amounts of fluid for 24-48 hours following the myelogram. It is also recommended to include caffeinated beverages (e.g. tea, soft drinks, and/or coffee) in order to help prevent a post procedure headache.

The needle insertion site may be sore for several days after the myelogram. Take Tylenol or another pain reliever as recommended by your regular doctor, if needed for pain relief. Aspirin and certain other pain relievers could increase the risk of bleeding. Be sure to only take medications approved by your doctor.

If you discontinued a blood thinner prior to undergoing this procedure, please contact the doctor who sent you for this study to determine when you can safely resume taking this specific medication.

Notify your doctor or report to the ER if you experience and of the following:

- ❖ Fever and/or chills
- ❖ Redness, swelling, draining, or bleeding at the procedure site
- ❖ Worsening pain at the procedure site or elsewhere
- ❖ Shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing

If you have any questions before and following your procedure call the Radiology nurse at 662-293-1404

Date: _____

(Patient Signature)

(Witness)