



CT Lumbar Spine with Myelogram

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Diagnostic Imaging
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Exam Information

Diagnostic Imaging

What is a myelogram with CT exam?

A myelogram is an x-ray exam that involves the injection of contrast media into the space around the spinal cord. This allows the doctor to obtain very detailed images of the spinal cord and its nerve roots.

How is the exam performed?

You will be lying on an x-ray table. The radiologist will go over the risks of the exam before cleaning an area of your back and injecting the local anesthetic.

Next, the doctor uses fluoroscopy (real-time, moving x-ray pictures) to insert a needle into the space around the spinal cord. After injecting contrast media the radiologist will slowly tilt the x-ray table allowing the contrast to flow around the spinal cord.

X-ray images are obtained during and after this process. Following the myelogram you will be brought to the CT department for additional scanning of your spine. When this is complete, you will be brought to a recovery area for observation.

How should I prepare for the exam?

Bring a copy of the order written by your doctor. You will also need to bring a list of your current medications.

- Do not eat any solid foods after midnight on the day of your exam. You may have clear liquids.
- You may take your daily medications except for blood thinners (Coumadin, Plavix). You will be contacted about when to stop taking these medications.
- You need to arrive 90 minutes before your appointment time. Check in at admitting and proceed to the Day Surgery department.
- You will need a ride home after the exam.

What will I feel during the exam?

The injection of local anesthetic will sting momentarily. You will feel pressure when the spinal needle is inserted. Repositioning of the spinal needle can cause a sharp pain.

Rarely, headaches, flushing and nausea can happen after the contrast injection.

Who interprets the exam and when will I get my results?

After the exam, a radiologist who is specially trained to interpret myelograms will review your x-rays and send a written report to the physician that ordered the exam for you. That physician will then contact you with your results.