

Radiology Department **Myelogram**

About the test

A myelogram is a study of the spinal cord, using a contrast agent that shows up on x-ray. This exam requires that a consent form (also known as informed consent) be signed prior to the start of the exam by the patient.

An informed consent means that the patient understands the reason for the procedure and has a general idea of what will be done during the procedure. Some patients cannot sign their own consent and will require a family member or someone with power of attorney to accompany him or her for the procedure and sign the consents.

Some preliminary films will be taken as part of setting up for the exam.

The radiologist will then come into the room and clean the area of our back where the needle will be introduced. Your back will be "numbed" with lidocaine before the spinal needle is introduced. The contrast will be put into the spinal canal once the needle is in the correct position and pictures of your back and spinal canal will be taken. Patients are asked to move from side to side during the time the images are being taken.

POST procedure instructions are very important. You will be on bed rest, here in the hospital for 6 hours with the head of the bed elevated 30 to 45 degrees. It is important to drink fluids after the exam, such as water or juice, in order to hydrate yourself. Some patients experience mild to severe headaches after the exam, and following your care instructions can reduce the possibility of a headache. Other post care instructions will be given to your nurse, who will implement these instructions while he or she cares for you.

How long does it take?

The procedure usually takes one hour.

What does it show?

The exam shows the spinal cord, slipped discs (disc herniation), tumors, and bone intrusion into the spinal canal.

How do I get the results?

After the exam, a Radiologist reviews the images, interprets the test and the results are sent to the ordering physician. Contact your physician in a couple of days, unless you have made other arrangements, so he or she can discuss the results with you. Most patients who have a myelogram receive the results prior to being discharged from the hospital.

How to prepare

- This test is scheduled through our Central Scheduling department 757-6475. The schedulers are available from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- The preparation for a myelogram is to not eat or drink 4 hours prior to the test.
- Leave all jewelry and valuables at home and wear comfortable clothing with no metal on clothing.
- You may take your prescribed medication if needed.
- Arrive at the hospital 30 minutes before the start of your test if an admitting clerk has registered you over the phone in the day or days prior to your test.
- Park in the hospital parking lot near the Admitting Entrance, and enter through the Admitting doors.
- You can go directly to Radiology if:
 - You are pre-registered for your test.
 - If you are not pre-registered, and it is between 8:00 a.m. and 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. A clerk is in Radiology during these hours and days.
- At all other times, please report to Admitting to be registered for testing.
- You will need to bring with you a picture I.D. for identification and your insurance cards.
- If you have any questions about registration, scheduling, or insurance, contact the admitting department at 757-6217.
- If you have any questions please feel free to call and speak with a Radiologic technologist at 757-6085.