

Myelogram

A myelogram is an x-ray test used to view the space around your spinal cord. It is done to check for problems affecting the spinal cord and nerves.

To Prepare

- Certain medicines may need to be stopped or changed for several days before this test. Tell your doctor about the medicines you take, including prescription and over the counter medicines, vitamins, minerals or other herbal supplements.
 - ❑ **If you are taking blood thinners**, talk to your doctor about when you should stop taking the medicine before the test. These medicines include:
 - ▶ aspirin, high dose
 - ▶ clopidogrel (Plavix)
 - ▶ enoxaparin (Lovenox)
 - ▶ warfarin (Coumadin)
 - ❑ **If you have diabetes and take metformin (Glucophage) or any medicine with metformin in it:**
 - ▶ Stop the medicine the day before the test.
 - ▶ Do not take the medicine for the first 2 days after the test.
 - ▶ Restart the medicine on the third day after the test.
- An adult family member or friend needs to come with you to take you home after the test. It is not safe for you to drive or leave alone.
- Plan to be at the hospital for the test for up to 6 hours. The test will last about 1 hour. You may also have a computerized tomography (CT) scan after the myelogram.

The Day of the Test

- **Do not** eat or drink anything for 4 hours before the time of your test.
- Take your regular medicines, except for blood thinners and metformin, with a sip of water.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing without snaps or zippers for the test. Do not wear jewelry. This includes watches, wedding bands, and any form of body piercings.
- **Tell the staff if you have ever had a reaction to the contrast medicine used for this test.**
- If you are **pregnant** or **think you may be pregnant**, tell the staff before the test.

During the Test

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- You lie on a table on your stomach.
- The doctor cleans part of your back. This may feel cold.
- Numbing medicine is put into the skin of your back.
- When the skin is numb, the doctor puts a needle in between the bones of your back. If you feel any pain, tell the doctor **where** and **how** it hurts.
- Some spinal fluid is removed for testing.
- Contrast medicine is then given through the needle into your back. It allows the area around your spine to be seen using x-rays.
- The x-ray table will move, and you may be asked to move into different positions at times. Try not to move while the x-rays are being taken.
- At the end of the test, the needle is removed and a band-aid placed over the site.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

The CT Scan

You may have a CT scan right after the myelogram. When your CT scan is done, you will be taken to a recovery area.

- The CT scan is an x-ray test with a scanner that shows pictures of your body.
- You may be asked to hold your breath while the pictures are being taken, based on the part of your body being scanned.
- During the test, your vital signs will be taken and you will be asked some questions.

After the Tests

- For your safety, you must stay in the hospital for 2 hours after your tests. You will be checked often during this time.
- You will need to lie in bed with your head up for 6 to 8 hours.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of liquids over the next 24 hours to replace the fluid removed during the test. Water and caffeinated beverages such as cola, tea and coffee are best. This will reduce the chance of a headache and help to remove the contrast from your body.
- If you get a headache, take a non-prescription pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).
- Have a family member or friend stay with you for the next 24 hours.
- When you are home, rest and limit your activity. Do not drive or do physical activity for 24 hours.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- A severe headache
- Numbness
- Loss of feeling or motion in your legs or arms
- Confusion or less alertness
- Swelling, warmth or redness at the needle site

- Bleeding that will not stop at the needle site
- Drainage of clear fluid at the needle site
- Seizure or convulsions
- Weakness
- Vomiting that will not stop

If your doctor is not available and you are having problems, visit your nearest emergency department.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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