

St. Luke's Imaging Services Patient/Family Information

Myelogram

What is a Myelogram?

A myelogram is an x-ray procedure your doctor uses to determine the condition of your spinal column as well as the spaces between the spinal column and the spaces between the spinal vertebrae. A myelogram can show an obstruction from a slipped disc, spinal cord tumors and very rare spinal abscesses.

The procedure is done in Imaging Services and usually takes 45 to 60 minutes. A CT scan of your spine may also be done at this time and usually takes an additional 30 to 45 minutes.

Special Note

Before the exam, please tell your doctor if you are or think you may be pregnant, or are nursing.

Also, it is important to tell your physician if you have had a previous reaction to x-ray dye.

Preparation

THE PATIENT MUST HAVE A DRIVER WITH THEM AT THE TIME OF DISCHARGE TO TRANSPORT THEM HOME.

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

Some medications may need to be discontinued before your procedure. A radiology nurse will be contacting you to review your medication list. If you have any questions about medications you are taking and if they need to be discontinued, you may contact a radiology nurse at 369-8932.

You should have nothing to eat or drink 4 hours prior to the scheduled exam time.

Please arrive 1 ½ hours prior to the scheduled exam time in the Surgicare area of the hospital, located just off of the fourth level of the parking ramp. The procedure will be done in the Imaging Services Department of the hospital.

What Happens During the Test?

The examination will be performed by a radiologist, a doctor who specializes in performing and interpreting x-ray procedures. You will be positioned on the x-ray table on your abdomen with a pillow under your abdomen. It is important that you lie still during the procedure. The doctor will cleanse your lower back with an antiseptic solution. This area will be numbed with an injection of local anesthetic. When the area is numb the doctor will insert a needle between two vertebrae into the space within the spinal column containing the spinal fluid.

A solution that will be visible on x-ray images (radiopaque) is then inserted into the spinal fluid space. The doctor removes the needle and covers the puncture site with a small bandage. While x-rays are being taken, you may be asked to turn slightly side to side. The table will be tilted up and down slowly. These movements provide better viewing of the spinal column.

After the Test

After the exam, you will spend 2 hours lying down at St. Luke's. It is important that you remain quiet in bed for the first 2 hours after the myelogram. The head of your bed will be raised slightly. Your diet on the day of the examination will be clear liquids only.

After arriving at home, you will need to take it easy. No heavy lifting or vigorous activity.

Important Discharge Instructions to the Patient

1. Patient is not to drive until the next morning.
2. Patient is to avoid vigorous movements after returning home.
3. Call attending physician or go to an emergency room for:
 - Fever greater than 102 degrees
 - Stiff neck
 - Severe headache
 - Continued mild headache for more than 48 hours
 - Severe nausea or seizure

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist will review the images shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss the results with you. Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.