

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital Radiology 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.

You will be admitted, one hour prior, to Outpatient Care Unit. The procedure is done in Radiology and usually takes 45 to 60 minutes. A CT scan of your spine might 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 there is a possibility 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 the exam to transport them home.

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

The day before the scheduled exam, clear liquids and regular meals are encouraged. Clear liquids include water, tea, clear gelatin, lemon-lime soda, orange or grape punch (not juice) and broth.

As of midnight before the exam, patients should not have any food, although clear liquids are allowed until 2 hours before the scheduled exam time. If you are insulin supported diabetic consult with your physician about having fluids the morning of your exam.

Medications should be discontinued prior to a myelogram procedure include:

Antipsychotic Agents, Phenothiazine Derivative, Tricyclic antidepressants and MAO Inhibitors should be held for at least 48 hours prior to the myelogram procedure. If a patient arrives in Outpatient on the day of the exam and has not held these medications for at least 48 hours before the exam, a radiologist must be consulted prior to prepping the patient.

Warfarin (Coumadin) must be held for 5 days prior to the exam.

Aspirin products must be held 7 days prior to the exam.

Clopidogrel (Plavix) must be held 8 days prior to the exam.

Other anti-platelet medications, please call the Radiology Department at 589-2402 to check.

Enoxaparin (Lovenox) or subcutaneous Heparin must be held 12 hours prior to the procedure.
Heparin infusion must be held 4 hours prior to the procedure.

If the ordering physician feels that the patient may not be taken off these medications or if the patient is diabetic, please consult with a radiologist – 589-2402.

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 spinal fluid. A sample of the fluid will be sent to the laboratory for testing. The radiologist will then take a series of x-rays of the spine. It is possible that you might also require a CT scan of the spine following the x-rays.

After the Test

It is important that you remain quiet in bed for the first two 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. Continue to drink two to three glasses of fluids every hour while you are awake.

Important Discharge Instructions for the Patient

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

When Will I Know the Results?

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

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Name: _____

Exam Date/Time: _____