

## PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR MYELOGRAMS

A myelogram (my-low-gram) is an x-ray study which provides a picture of the spinal cord and is completed by a radiologist. The contrast dye will be injected with a thin needle into the fluid filled sac which covers the spinal cord. The radiologist will also use a CT scan when doing a myelogram. This test will help your doctor determine what is wrong with the structures in your back.

The test takes about one (1) hour and you will be required to stay in our observation area for two (2) hours after the test.

- You may bring items you want to use while you are here. There will be a television in your room.
- Bring medications that you normally take every day.
- You must have a licensed, responsible driver to drive you home when you are discharged from the hospital. You will not be able to drive yourself home, take public transportation or be transported in a taxi.

### I. BEFORE YOUR MYELOGRAM

Contact your primary doctor if you are pregnant or think that you might be. Radiation exposure may cause problems for your baby.

Tell your primary doctor if you are breast feeding.

There is a risk of allergic reactions to contrast dye. Be sure to let your primary doctor know if you have had any contrast reactions in the past.

Let your primary doctor know if you have kidney problems.

Be sure your doctor has a list of all your medications (prescribed and over-the-counter) and all herbs vitamins, and supplements you are taking.

Tell your doctor if you have a bleeding disorder or are taking blood thinner medications. You may need to stop these medications before the procedures. **Please talk to the doctor who prescribes the blood thinners for you.** DO NOT STOP TAKING BLOOD THINNERS WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH THE DOCTOR WHO PRESCRIBES THESE MEDICATIONS.

## II. THE MORNING OF YOUR MYELOGRAM

1. You may eat a light breakfast.
2. Shower or bathe before coming to the hospital.
3. Check in at the registration area in the main lobby at the hospital thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled procedure time.
4. Bring a current and complete list of all your medications (including prescribed medications, vitamins, herbal products, supplements and over-the-counter medications.)
5. Bring a list of your medication allergies and / or sensitivities.
6. Please leave all valuables at home. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items that are not necessary for your treatment.

Before your procedure you will be asked to change into a patient gown. The radiologist will explain the procedure to you including its potential risks and complications. You will have an opportunity to have all your questions answered. You will be asked to sign a consent. Bring your reading glasses, if necessary.

## III. DURING YOUR MYELOGRAM

You will lie on your stomach with a pillow under it. Your lower back will be washed with a cool sterile soap solution. The doctor will numb only the area in your back where the needle will be inserted. You may feel some burning, stinging, or pressure. The medication will not numb your legs or other parts of your body.

You must remain still during this procedure. A thin hollow needle is inserted into the spinal canal. The x-ray table may be moved at this time. Contrast dye will be injected into the spinal canal through the hollow needle. You may feel stinging, burning sensation, heaviness, or pressure. These will subside. Let the doctor know if you feel pain. The doctor will position you in several different positions in order to allow the contrast dye to settle in the nerve roots that need to be examined. Your body will be supported so you should not fear sliding off the table. You will have a CT scan following your myelogram.

## IV. AFTER THE PROCEDURE

You will be taken to the recovery area on a stretcher. You will be assisted to a lounge chair for the remainder of the recovery.

1. You will be allowed to do quiet activities such as watching TV, playing cards or reading.
2. You will be assisted to the bathroom, if needed.
3. You may experience increased pain or a headache after your myelogram. These symptoms will go away as you get rid of the contrast in your system.
4. You will be provided with a light meal during your recovery.
5. You will be encouraged to drink lots of fluids.
6. Plan on being in the recovery area for two (2) hours.
7. You will be given additional discharge instructions prior to going home.
8. Upon discharge you must have be transported home by a licensed, responsible driver. You are not able to drive yourself or to take a taxi or public transportation.

## V. RECOVERY AT HOME

1. Do not go to work the day after your myelogram.
2. After one day of inactivity, you may resume your usual activities.