

Lumbar Puncture

A Lumbar Puncture is a diagnostic procedure that involves the placement of a needle in the spinal canal for the purpose of collecting spinal fluid for lab work.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR THE PROCEDURE?

1. Drink plenty of clear liquids but no solid food for 4 hours before the procedure.
2. A Lumbar Puncture is generally not performed during pregnancy because of the potential risk of embryo/fetal injury. Advise the technologist if you are, or may be, pregnant.
3. Discontinue **Coumadin (Warfarin)**, **Plavix (Clopidogrel)**, **Ticlid (Ticlopidine)**, and **Pletal (Cilostazol)** with permission from the prescribing physician for 5 days prior to the procedure. If you take Coumadin (Warfarin), a Prothrombin Time (PT) and INR will be obtained here at the clinic before the Lumbar Puncture.
4. Discontinue low-molecular weight heparin therapy with **Lovenox (Enoxaparin)**, **Fragmin (Dalteparin)**, **Normiflo (Ardeparin)**, or **Orgaran (Danaparoid)** with permission from the prescribing physician for 24 hours prior to the Lumbar Puncture.
5. **Arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure.**

HOW IS THE PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

Prior to the procedure, your skin is cleansed with antiseptic soap and numbed with local anesthetic. The physician uses fluoroscopy to accurately place a needle in the spinal canal. A small amount of fluid is removed for laboratory analysis. The procedure typically takes 15-20 minutes.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE LUMBAR PUNCTURE?

1. Drink plenty of clear liquids – at least 8 oz. every hour on the day of the procedure.
2. Resume a regular diet and any medications you routinely take (including pain medications).
3. Avoid consumption of alcohol for 24 hours.
4. Lie flat with your head slightly elevated for 8 hours.
5. No driving the day of the procedure.
6. Do not engage in strenuous work, exercise, physical therapy or lifting for 48 hours.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS:

Headache: This is the most common complication and occurs in about 20% of patients. These usually resolve within 2-3 days. Lie flat in bed, increase your fluid intake, and take your usual medications as directed by your physician. A blood patch is occasionally needed.

SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS ARE RARE BUT POTENTIALLY INCLUDE:

1. **Infection:** Severe infections, such as meningitis, are rare.
2. **Bleeding:** Bleeding is a rare complication and is more common in patients taking anticoagulants, such as Coumadin/Warfarin, Lovenox, Plavix and Ticlid.
3. **Nerve damage:** Extremely rare but can occur from needle trauma, infection, and bleeding.
4. **Seizures:** Extremely rare.

CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT 615-356-3999 FOR THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

1. Fever greater than 100°.
2. Headache that is unresolved with medication, bed rest, and fluids after 2-3 days.
3. Increasing pain, swelling or redness at the injection site.
4. Difficulty walking or profound weakness of the arms or legs.

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Revised 09.24.2013

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