



Myelogram Patient Education Sheet

What is a Myelogram? A myelogram is a simple test performed to look at the spinal sac and the nerve roots that exit from the spinal canal. It will not show the disc or nerves directly, however. There are two types of myelograms; Low Dose Myelogram and Full Dose myelogram. In both cases, the radiologist will place contrast (X-ray dye) into the spinal sac, through a small needle that he/she inserts into the low back. In most cases, the needle will be inserted into the low back, even when the neck or mid-back area is being evaluated.

Low dose myelogram: Once the contrast (dye) has been placed, the needle will be removed and a CT scan will be performed immediately. You will be walked to the CT department, except for cervical (neck)myelography, where you will be taken to CT on a gurney. You will lie on a table that passes within a large doughnut-shaped machine for the CT scan. No additional needles are required for this part of the exam. *Expected length of stay at Intermountain Medical Imaging for a low dose myelogram will be 1.5 to 2 hours.*

Full dose myelogram: Once the contrast (dye) has been placed, the needle will be removed. Several different X-rays will be taken of the spine showing the contrast (dye) within the spinal sac. You will then be taken to a waiting area where you will be asked to sit semi upright for approximately three (3) hours. This waiting period allows proper dilution of the contrast (dye) within the spinal sac. After this waiting period, you will be taken to the CT department so that a CT scan may be performed. You will lie on a table that passes within a large doughnut-shaped machine for the CT scan. No additional needles are required for this part of the exam. *Expected length of stay at Intermountain Medical Imaging for a full dose myelogram will be 4 to 5 hours.*

Patient Preparation for a Myelogram:

Previous exams: If you have had recent x-rays, CT scans, or MRI scans of the spine performed at an outside facility, please bring those films to your appointment. This may save an unnecessary repeat of radiographs and help clarify the reason for your present visit. If the films are not available, please bring a copy of the report.

Allergies: If you have had an allergic reaction (i.e. hives, itchiness, difficulty breathing, and any treatment which required hospitalization) to the injected dye for a previous radiology exam (CT scan, angiogram, etc.) notify the Physician suggesting your myelogram. (S)he may prescribe oral steroids for you to take the night before your myelogram. This medicine will reduce the risk of a repeat allergic reaction. If you fail to notify your doctor prior to arriving for the myelogram, the test may have to be postponed, to allow for the appropriate amount of time for the steroids to take effect.

Medications: If you are on prescription anticoagulants, such as Coumadin or Heparin, remind your physician when (s)he is scheduling the test. These medications should be discontinued before the exam to prevent unnecessary bleeding during the exam. You may continue **all** of your other medications, including pain medicine. If you are diabetic and on, metformin, glucophage, or glucovance, you will be asked to discontinue these medications for 48hrs after the exam.

Eating: You should NOT eat solid food after midnight or 6 hours prior to the myelogram. You should drink plenty of fluids the night before and drink at least 16 oz. of liquid 2 hours before your exam. Liquid intake is strongly encouraged at the completion of the exam to help clear the myelographic dye from your body. **You may not have any alcoholic beverages for 24 hours before or 24 hours after your exam.** If you are diabetic, exceptions can be arranged, please inform the receptionist when your exam is being scheduled.

Driving: You WILL NOT be able to drive for 24 hours after the myelogram. Please make arrangements to have someone drive you home after your study.

Home Care: We recommend that you DO NOT return to work the day of your exam, although you will not need to take any additional days off from work. Please refer to the medication lists for special instructions.