

About Your Myelogram

What You Need to Know and Do

A myelogram is a test to check problems with your spinal canal. This is the structure that holds your spinal cord.

Images of your spinal canal are made using X-ray or computed tomography (CT).

What should I do before my myelogram?

If you are getting any type of sedation, do not eat or drink 8 hours before testing. You may have water and other clear fluids.

Let us know if you:

- are or may be pregnant
- have any allergies
- have any bleeding problems or take blood thinners or other medicines
- have had back surgery or low-back pain.

Aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and naproxen are fine to take before your test.

Antiplatelet and anticoagulation medicines should be stopped for a period of time before the arthrogram, as shown below.

14 days before the myelogram, stop taking:

- ticlopidine (Ticlid)

7 days before, stop taking:

- clopidogrel (Plavix)
- prasugrel (Effient)

5 days before, stop taking:

- ticagrelor (Brilinta)

- warfarin (Coumadin)
- acenocoumarol

4 days before, stop taking:

- fondaparinux (Arixtra)

2 days (full 48 hours) before, stop taking:

- apixiban (Eliquis)

2 or more days before, stop taking:

- dabigatran (Pradaxa)
- rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

The exact number of days before your procedure for these 2 drugs depends on your physical condition and kidney function. Call (615) 322-0878 to ask how many days it should be.

1 day (full 24 hours) before, stop taking:

- heparin
- LMWH (Fragmin, Lovenox, Normiflo, Orgaran)

You can start retaking the above medicines 24 hours after your procedure.

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What happens during the myelogram?

We will take X-rays of your spine.

Your lower back will be cleaned, covered with drapes, and injected with a numbing medicine.

The doctor will insert a thin needle into your spinal canal space and inject contrast fluid.

We will take X-rays of your spine again. You may have a CT test.

What should I do after my myelogram?

- If you were sedated, someone must drive you home. Take it easy for the rest of the day.
- Don't do any strenuous activity for a day or two.
- Don't bend over for a day or two.
- If you get a headache, it often helps to lie flat.
- Drink lots of fluids. Water is best. But caffeinated drinks may help with a post-procedure headache.

What should I do if I have problems?

You should call your doctor right away if you have:

- a headache lasting 2 days or more
- fever that is 1°F above your normal temperature that lasts 24 to 48 hours
- pain in your back that doesn't go away
- numbness, weakness or tingling in your groin or legs.

Who can I contact with questions?

For any problems, concerns, or questions, you may call the Radiology department at (615) 322-0878

After hours (between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays, and on weekends and holidays), call (615) 343-7185. Ask for the Radiology resident on call.

if you have an emergency, go to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1.