

HOWELL ALLEN CLINIC
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MYELOGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

Your Doctor has requested that you have a myelogram. This is a special X-ray test that allows thorough evaluation of the spinal cord and nerves. The test may be done for the neck (cervical), mid-back (thoracic), or the lower back (lumbar). The procedure is very similar, regardless of the area being studied.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TEST:

1. **Do not eat solid food 6 hours prior to your scheduled exam time. You should drink plenty of fluids the day before and day of your procedure, but need to avoid caffeine.**
2. **If you are taking pain medications, do not take 6 hours prior to your exam. If you are taking medication for high blood pressure and heart problems, you may take your medications as usual.**
3. **If you are taking antibiotics for any reason, you must finish the full prescription before your myelogram can be done.**
4. **If you are taking Coumadin, Plavix, or any blood-thinning medication, you must inform your doctor – you must stop taking this medicine several days in advance. Please check with your medical doctor for his approval. Attached is a document that addresses each medication, and their specific instructions.**
5. **If you have ever had an allergic reaction to X-ray dye (contrast), you should tell your doctor. You must also be sure to tell the X-ray nurse. A contrast allergy does not always prevent you from having the test, but certain medications may be given before the start of the test if your doctor or the radiologist feels that it is necessary.**
6. **The radiologist or nurse will discuss the myelogram with you in detail before the test. Be sure to ask any questions that need answered at this time. (The nurse will attempt to call you prior to your myelogram to get a brief medical history)**
7. **If you have had recent X-rays or a MRI of the area we are examining, please bring them with you to your appointment.**
8. **The duration of your appointment is typically 1-2 hours. Please arrive to the office 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment. You will need someone to drive you home and stay with you overnight!**

WHAT IS A MYELOGRAM?

A myelogram is a special test used to detect problems of the spinal cord, spinal canal, discs and nerve roots. A radiologist performs this outpatient procedure. A special dye (contrast) is injected into the spinal canal allowing for x-rays to view these areas more clearly.

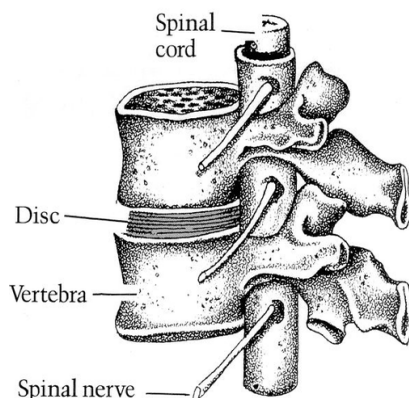


FIG. 2

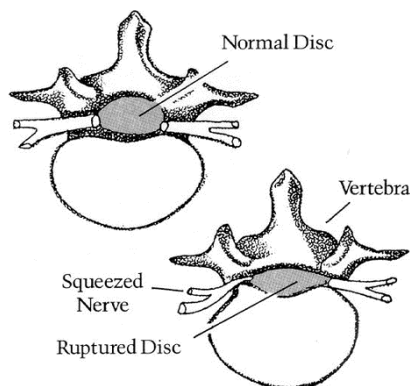


FIG. 3 – Healthy Disc Versus Ruptured Disc

WHAT TO EXPECT...

- Our nurse will take your history and vital signs. You will be placed in our myelogram holding area and made comfortable.
- Preliminary x-rays will be made. The Radiologist (a physician specializing in radiographic procedures) will talk with you regarding your test and after your consent has been obtained, he will administer x-ray contrast into the spinal canal. This procedure generally takes only 5-10 minutes to perform and typically is not very uncomfortable. You may experience mild cramping in your low back, hips, and buttocks due to the x-ray contrast, which is entirely normal. The doctor will remove the needle, leave the room and the technologist will take several pictures of your spinal canal with the contrast in place.

If you are having a **lumbar myelogram** the technologist will make several pictures of your lumbar spine with the table flat and in a semi-upright position. After checking the images you will move onto your stretcher and be taken for your CT scan. The total myelogram time will be 15-20 minutes.

If you are having a **cervical myelogram** the technologist will position your neck, place supports across your shoulders, and tip the head of the table down to get the contrast from your low back to the neck area. This generally only takes a few seconds, the table will be leveled and images will be made. You will move onto a stretcher and taken to the CT room. The total myelogram time will be about 15-20 minutes.

AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

Following your myelogram you will be monitored for a period of time. You will be asked to remain in bed, with the head slightly elevated. You will be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids. Both of these are done to lessen the chance of getting a headache.

You will be given discharge instructions before leaving the Imaging Office. You will need someone to drive you home and stay with you 24 hours after your procedure. Your doctor will call you to discuss the results with you and make recommendations for your care.

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PATIENTS TAKING

PLAVIX, TICLID, COUMADIN (WARFARIN), LOVENOX, PLETAL, HEPARIN, PERSANTINE, AGGRENEX, DICUMEROL, ELMIRON, EFFIENT

If you take one of the above medications (these medicines affect your body's ability to form blood clots), your physician has determined that this medicine is crucial for your good health. Your neurosurgeon has prescribed that you receive a procedure to address your pain difficulty. These procedures can be done safely in patients who take these medications, but the patient has to stop taking them several days in advance (see table below). For certain medical conditions, it may not be safe to stop these medicines for even a brief period. Therefore, if you are scheduled by your neurosurgeon for a procedure (epidural steroid injection, myelogram, discogram, etc.), you must notify your primary care doctor and have him/her advise you as to whether it is safe for you to discontinue the medication for the time listed below. Once he/she has advised you that discontinuing the medications for that period is safe, your physician must fax a document stating it is safe to discontinue your medication. (fax to 615-341-3555). If your primary care doctor determines that you cannot stop your medicine for that period of time, let your neurosurgeon know immediately so that alternative therapy can be discussed.

Heparin	MUST STOP 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE
Lovenox	MUST STOP 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE
Persantine	MUST STOP 3 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE
Aggrenox	MUST STOP 3 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE
Coumadin	MUST STOP 5 DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE
Dicumerol	MUST STOP 5 DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE
Elmiron	MUST STOP 5 DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE
Plavix	MUST STOP 7 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE
Pletal	MUST STOP 7 DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE
Effient	MUST STOP 10 DAYS PRIOR TO PROCEDURE
Ticlid	MUST STOP 14 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF PROCEDURE

STOPPING THESE MEDICATIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH THE PRESCRIBING DOCTOR CAN RESULT IN STROKE, LUNG DAMAGE, OR EVEN DEATH