

# Myelogram



A myelogram is a test to check problems with your spinal canal. This includes the spinal cord, nerve roots, and spinal lining. The canal is a tunnel-like structure in your spine that surrounds your spinal cord. A myelogram uses a dye injected into the spinal canal with the guidance of imaging. The imaging is typically done by a real-time form of X-ray (called fluoroscopy). Pictures are then taken of your spinal canal.

## How do I get ready for a myelogram?

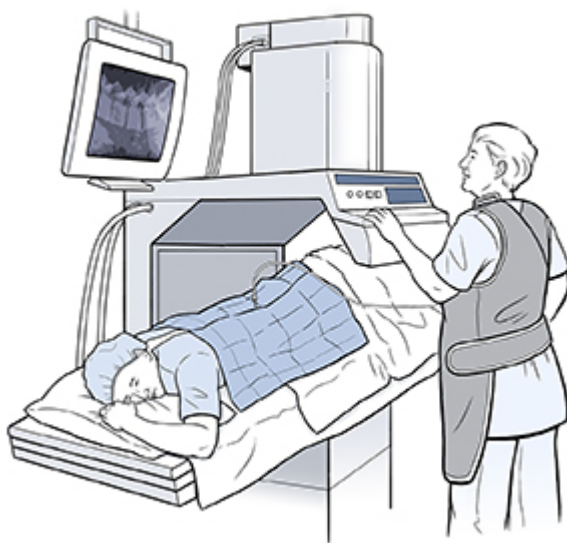
- Don't eat the morning of the test. But you can drink water or other clear fluids.
- If told to, stop taking medicines before the test.
- Arrange for someone to drive you home.

## What to tell the person doing your study

Tell the healthcare provider if you:

- Are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- Have any bleeding problems
- Take blood thinners (anticoagulants) or other medicines. These include aspirin, certain antipsychotic medicines, and antidepressants. You may be told to stop taking these 1 or more days before your test.
- Have had back surgery or low back pain
- Have any allergies

## What happens during a myelogram?



- You will change into a hospital gown.
- Your lower back will be cleaned, covered with drapes, and injected with a numbing medicine.

- Your healthcare provider will use X-rays (fluoroscopy) to guide a thin needle into your spinal canal space.
- The healthcare provider may take out a small amount of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). The provider will inject dye (contrast fluid) into your spinal canal.
- The table will be tilted in various directions to help move the contrast dye to different areas of your spinal canal.
- More X-rays will be taken.
- If you need a CT test, it will follow the X-rays.

## **What happens after a myelogram?**

- Take it easy for the rest of the day, as advised.
- Don't do any physical activity or bending for 1 to 2 days after the procedure, or as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Lie down with your head raised if you get a headache, or if directed to do so.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Your healthcare provider will discuss the test results with you at a follow-up appointment.

## **What are the risks of a myelogram?**

- Small risks of pain, bleeding or infection at the injection site or in or around the spinal canal
- Headache
- CSF leak that may need a blood patch or other treatments
- Injury to a nerve or the spinal cord at the injection site
- X-ray radiation exposure (generally believed to be low risk and safe)

## **When should I call my healthcare provider?**

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of the following occur:

- A headache that lasts 2 days or more
- Fever of 100.4 °F (38°C) or above, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Chills
- Severe upset stomach or vomiting
- Trouble urinating or having a bowel movement
- Lasting pain in your back, or tingling in your groin or legs
- Or anything else your provider told you to report based on your health condition

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