

# Lumbar Puncture

# Patient Information

## **Overview**

A Lumbar Puncture is a procedure that uses x-ray guidance to assist in the removal of a sample of spinal fluid for analysis or to inject a radioisotope for a nuclear medicine cisternogram study. If you are scheduled for a cisternogram study, please refer to the patient information on cisternograms for further information.

## **Preparation for the exam:**

Do not eat any solid foods after 9pm on the evening before your procedure. You may have clear liquids until three hours before your appointment. You may take your routine medications on the day of your procedure. However, the following medications need to be discontinued prior to your exam:

- Plavix: Please discontinue 7 days prior to your exam.
- Aspirin: Please discontinue 7 days prior to your exam.
- Coumadin: Please discontinue 2 days prior to your exam. In all cases with Coumadin, consult your physician before discontinuing. Additional blood tests, such as an PT/INR (Prothrombin time/International Normalized Ratio) and PTT (Partial thromboplastin time) need to be performed before your appointment. Specifically, your INR reading needs to be less than 1.5 and your PTT reading less than 40.
- Lovenox: Please discontinue 24 hours prior to your exam.
- Heparin: Please discontinue 4 hours prior to your exam. Additional lab work such as a PTT needs to be performed prior to your appointment. Specifically, your PTT reading needs to be less than 40.

If back pain is a problem for you, you may take your usual pain medication in preparation for the procedure. Please make arrangements for someone to drive you home after the procedure. You may not drive home yourself.

## **Appointment time:**

Your appointment will be scheduled ahead of time by your doctors' office through the hospital scheduling service. If you are unsure of your appoint time, need to reschedule, or cancel your appointment, please contact your doctors' office or the hospital scheduling service at 770-538-7666 Menu Option 1. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your exam, as you will be required to register, visit our billing office and fill out other necessary forms. Since Northeast Georgia is a major medical center there are emergencies that could arise that might extend wait time. Please try to be patient and be assured that we will get to your study as quickly as possible.

## **Your Lumbar Puncture:**

You will be escorted into the exam room by a radiologic technologist. You will have to change into a hospital gown. When you arrive in the room, you will be placed on your stomach on the X-ray table. Please let us know if you feel that this position will be difficult for you. (A lumbar puncture takes between a half hour and an hour to complete.) A small area on your back will be washed and a local anesthetic will be injected to make the area numb. The local anesthetic may sting for a few moments. After that you should be quite comfortable. Next a needle will be placed into an area near your spine. If you are scheduled for a cisternogram following your lumbar puncture, a small amount of radioisotope will be injected. A small sample of spinal fluid will be taken, and then the needle will be withdrawn. A bandage will be placed over the site. (The fluid sample will be sent to a laboratory for analysis.)



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***The conclusion of your exam:***

You will receive written, take-home instructions at the conclusion of your exam. After the procedure you will lie on your back for one hour. The nurse/technologist will assist you with a bedpan or urinal during this time if necessary. You may eat or drink as you like. Be sure to let your nurse or technologist know if you experience a headache, leg pain or back ache. When you are discharged, you must travel with a companion and may not drive. When you arrive home, we suggest that you rest and limit your activity. If you have small children, arrange for someone to care for them. If you have a headache, take two Tylenol tablets (325 mg each) every four hours as needed. If a headache or nausea persists, please contact your personal physician.

***Results:***

The radiologist will interpret your exam and send the results to your doctor.

