

## Radiology - Fluoroscopy Department

# Myelogram Information Leaflet

### Introduction

You have been advised by your hospital consultant to have a myelogram. The consultant who referred you should have discussed the reasons for this procedure with you. Please read this leaflet carefully to make sure you successfully prepare for the procedure.

This leaflet may not answer all your questions, so if you have any worries, please do not hesitate to call the telephone number on your appointment letter. If you feel unhappy with any part of your care please ask to speak to the Superintendent Radiographer.

Please contact the X-ray Department if your weight is equal to or more than 138kg (21½stone) – You may require an alternative examination.

### Referral and Consent

If you are having the myelogram as a planned procedure, then you should have plenty of time to discuss the situation with your consultant and the radiologist (a specialised X-ray doctor) who will be performing the procedure.

It is possible that you need this procedure done as an emergency, in which case there may be less time for discussion, **but none the less you should have had sufficient explanation before you sign the consent form.** If, after discussion with your hospital doctor or radiologist, you do not want the procedure carried out, then you can decide against it.



## Patient Information

If the radiologist feels that your condition has changed or that your symptoms do not indicate such a procedure is necessary then he/she will explain this to you, communicate with the referring clinician and ask that you return to your referring clinician or ward for review. At all times the radiologist and referring clinician will be acting in your best interests.

## Points to Remember

- Please bring any sprays or inhalers that you are taking with you to your appointment.
- If you are taking Aspirin or Warfarin please call the telephone number on your appointment letter as soon as possible and ask that the radiologist (x-ray doctor) who will be performing your examination is notified. He/she will need to discuss this with your hospital consultant before your appointment can be confirmed.
- If you are on any other medication from your doctor please continue to take it as normal.
- We also ask you to leave any valuable possessions at home.
- You will be admitted to a ward before the examination and you will return to the ward for up to 4 hours for post procedure care. It is not expected for you to stay overnight.

## What is a Myelogram?

- A myelogram is a special X-ray examination using both fluoroscopy and/or CT images of the spine, and is often used to investigate possible herniated discs or spinal canal narrowing in patients who cannot go through MRI scans.
- The images show the fluid filled space (subarachnoid space) around the nerves in your spinal canal. The examination will be carried out by a radiologist who may be assisted by a radiographer and possibly a radiology nurse.
- The procedure itself may take up to 1 hour.

## Preparation

- You will have had some special blood tests to check your blood clotting ability.
- You may eat and drink normally.

## Patient Information

- **You will need someone to drive you home after the examination. You should not drive for 24 hours after the examination.**
- If you have a high fever and are feeling unwell such as flu, the procedure may need to be postponed. However, if you have a common cold this will not affect the procedure.
- You will receive a letter giving details of the ward to which you will be admitted before this examination.

## What will happen when I arrive?

- Please go to the ward as instructed in your appointment letter. You **may** need to report to the ward the **evening before** your procedure.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown
- The Porters will collect you and take you to the x-ray department, on your bed, in time for your procedure.

## During your examination

- You will be taken into the X-ray room where the examination will be explained to you by the consultant radiologist and you may ask any questions that you have.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form before the procedure can begin

## Myelogram:

- The radiologist may mark the area to be investigated on your back with a marker pen
- You will be asked to either lie down on your left side on the X-ray table, or sit on the edge of the table, with your feet on a step, and lean forward. These positions open the spaces between the vertebrae (bones) in your spine to allow a spinal needle to be inserted into your spinal canal. This is called a lumbar puncture.
- This is a sterile procedure and the radiologist will wear sterile gloves. Your skin will be cleaned with cold antiseptic liquid and sterile towels will be placed over you.
- Local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin to numb the area before the spinal needle is inserted.
- A small amount of spinal fluid may be collected through the spinal needle and sent for analysis.

## Patient Information

- Contrast medium (a colourless fluid that shows on x-ray images) will be injected through the spinal needle into your spinal canal. The spinal needle will be removed and a small plaster dressing will be put over the injection site.
- You may be asked to turn several times whilst on the x-ray table to help ensure the contrast agent reaches the affected areas of the spine.
- The X-ray table may be tilted and further X-ray images taken.
- You may also be transferred back onto your bed and taken to the CT scanner for further images. You will be asked to lie still during the scan.

## Risks of the procedure

As with any procedure or operation, side-effects are possible. The possibility of these complications happening to you will be discussed with you before the procedure takes place.

- It is possible that you may have an allergic reaction from the contrast agent used. You will be asked about allergies by the radiologist or radiographer at the time.
- There is a very small risk of an infection being introduced during this procedure; a headache for several hours after the procedure is common.
- There is a small risk of bleeding and nerve root irritation from having a needle inserted into your spinal canal.
- X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives, this comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground. Exposure to X-rays carries a small risk, but your doctor feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having the test. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you receive.

## Safety

The contrast agent contains iodine and is removed from your body (excreted) by the kidneys in your urine. Please inform the radiologist:

- If you are allergic to iodine, have any other allergies or suffer from asthma.
- If you have reacted previously to the injection used for kidney X-rays and CT scanning.
- If you are on renal dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys.

## Patient Information

**Female patients aged 12– 55 years:** The risks of radiation are slightly higher for the unborn child so you will be asked to confirm that you are not pregnant before the examination can proceed.

## After your examination

- You will be taken back to the ward where you will sit up in bed for 3 – 4 hours for bed rest
- You are advised not bend down as this can cause a headache
- Do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure
- If you have any problems after the examination please see your GP

## How do I get the results?

The results will not be given to you immediately. They will be sent to the hospital consultant who referred you to us for this examination.

## Other Sources of Information:

For information about the effects of X-rays and information about radiology departments visit the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/x-ray/>

Please note that the views expressed in these websites do not necessarily reflect the views of UHCW NHS Trust or the NHS.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

### Document History

Department:	Fluoroscopy
Contact:	27161
Updated:	December 2021
Review:	December 2023
Version:	6.2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/743/08