

Lumbar Discography

You have been scheduled for a

Date of Procedure: _____

Time: _____

Arrive 15 minutes before your visit. Check into Radiology at UW Hospital. **If you cannot make this visit, please call (608) 263-9729.**

Your doctor wants you to have a lumbar discogram. This test looks for problems in the disc area.

The discogram will be done by a radiologist. It will take about 1-2 hours to complete. First, we numb your skin. We place a thin needle into some of your lumbar discs. We put a liquid with iodine into the disc area to confirm placement of the needles. We will then ask you if you are feeling pain in your back.

After the test, many patients report more low back pain. You may need more pain medicine after this test. The pain may also limit what you can do for a few days.

To Prepare for the Test

To have this test:

- You need to have an MRI or CT scan of your lower spine.
- You must weigh less than 420 lbs.
- **Do not** eat for 2 hours before your test. You may have water to drink.
- You may take your usual dose of pain medicine the morning of the test. **Do not repeat the dose before the test.** This may affect the results of the test.

- Please bring your pain medicine with you. You may take it after your test, if needed.
- You **must** have someone drive you home after your test.

Please let us know if you:

- Have an active infection, such as a cold, sinus infection, etc.
- Are allergic to x-ray dyes, iodine, or local anesthetics (numbing medicines).
- May be or are pregnant.
- Are taking blood thinners.
- Have diabetes or heart problems.

The Day of the Test

Enter the hospital through the clinic entrance. Take the Atrium elevators to the 3rd floor. Check in at the (G3/3) Radiology desk.

If you have an MRI or CT from another hospital, you must bring it with you for the us to review.

The radiologist will meet with you. We will explain the risks and benefits of the test. You will have a chance to ask questions before your test.

After the Test

You **must** take the rest of the day off from work, so please plan for this.

- Avoid any physical activity or heavy lifting for 24 hours.
- You may return to your normal routine as soon as you are able.
- You may take the medicines that you use for your low back pain.

- It is normal to have more pain after the test. The pain may last a few days.

When to Call

- Pain that gets worse for no reason
- Chills
- Fever greater than 100.4° by mouth for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart
- Redness that gets worse or swelling around the site
- Any drainage from the site where the needle was placed

Who to Call

To speak to a radiologist, call:
608-263-9729 option #3.

After hours, call **(608) 263-6400**. Please ask for the radiology resident on call. Leave your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back. The toll-free number is: **1-800-323-8942**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5244.