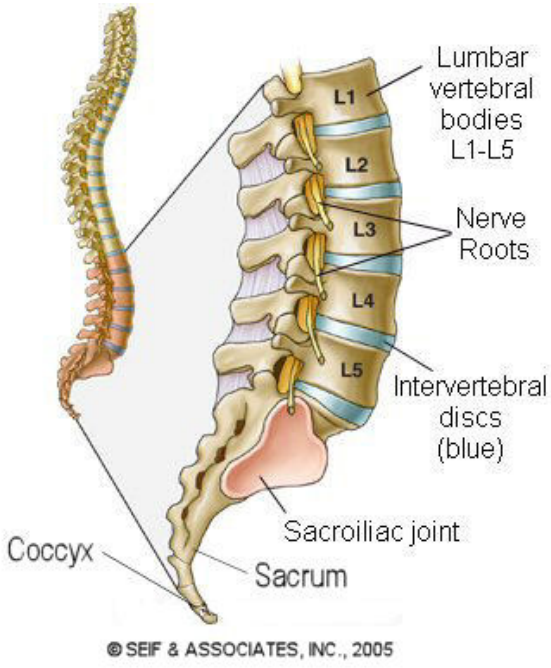
Myelogram
Neuro-Radiology

A myelogram is an x-ray procedure that uses a special dye to look at your spine (*vertebrae*) and spinal cord. This test is performed by a radiologist (a specially trained doctor who specializes in x-ray procedures). A myelogram is used to help your caregiver find problems with the spine, spinal cord, or surrounding structures. A bulging (*herniated*) disc, tumor, or spinal nerve root injury may show up as an indentation in the spinal cord and may push on the spinal nerves.



A myelogram is sometimes combined with a CT or MRI scan to get a better view of the spine. In some people, an MRI scan cannot be done because of metal plates and screws in their spine.

PROCEDURE

You may be asked to lay on your stomach for the myelogram test. The skin on your back or neck will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. The radiologist will inject numbing medicine into the area that was cleaned. When the numbing medicine is given, this may cause some pain. Using an x-ray for guidance, the radiologist will then insert a needle between your vertebrae. A small amount of spinal fluid may be removed for laboratory testing. The radiologist will then inject a special dye (contrast material) through the needle. The dye mixes with the spinal fluid and helps the vertebrae and spinal cord be more visible on x-ray. The needle will be taken out and a band aid is placed over the needle site. The table you are laying on may be tilted in different directions to help the dye move up the spinal column so different areas can be seen.

DAY OF PROCEDURE

- Follow your caregivers instructions on what medicines to take and what you may eat before the myelogram procedure.
- Remove all jewelry.
- A consent form will need to be signed so the myelogram can be performed.
- Medicine may be given to help you relax.
- You may receive additional medication or intravenous fluids to prevent possible side effects (such as dehydration or nausea).
- During the myelogram,you may be asked to change positions.
- Your blood pressure, temperature, heart beat (*pulse*), and breathing will be routinely checked.
- If you develop headache, nausea, or vomiting during the myelogram, medication will be available to help.
- You will be encouraged to drink lots of fluids after the procedure.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE LET YOUR CAREGIVER ABOUT

- Any allergies, especially to shellfish or iodine.
- Any kidney problems.
- Any seizures you have or have had.
- There is a possibility you are pregnant.
- You are taking prescription medications, especially:

- Blood-thinning medications like coumadin, heparin, plavix, or aspirin products.
- Diabetic medication, including metformin.
- Seizure medication.
- Antidepressant medication.

RISKS

The myelogram procedure has potential risks which include:

- *Meningitis* (infection of the spinal fluid).
- Spinal headache.
- Allergic reaction to the dye.
- Bleeding into the spinal column from the needle insertion.
- Spinal fluid leak from the needle insertion.
- Possible seizures.

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