



Radiology Services

Myelogram

Understanding Your Myelogram

This exam, performed in the Radiology Services Department, is a special X-ray exam of the spinal cord and canal. A myelogram is a relatively safe procedure during which a contrast media (a dye solution) is injected into the spinal canal, making it visible through a special fluoroscope camera onto a computer screen and X-ray film. This exam is an important tool in helping physicians diagnose disc problems, spinal cord tumors and pinched nerves. A myelogram is performed by a radiologist specially trained to diagnose problems of the spine and spinal cord.

How should I prepare for the exam?

- Be sure to relax and follow all the instructions given by your physician
- It is very important that you eat nothing after midnight on the night before your scheduled exam, but you may drink clear liquids (i.e., apple juice, coffee, tea)
- If the myelogram is scheduled in the afternoon, you may have breakfast before 8:00 a.m.
- You will be asked to put on a hospital gown
- If you are an outpatient, you will need to make arrangements to have someone drive you home and be with you for 24 hours after your exam
- A myelogram normally takes 30 minutes to an hour and may be followed by a CT scan, which normally takes approximately 30 minutes

Before Your Exam

A radiologic technologist/nurse will talk with you before your myelogram to make sure you understand the exam and how to prepare for it. This specialist will be glad to answer any questions you may have about your exam.

Please arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled time to register. Written orders for your exam are necessary to perform the procedure—**we cannot proceed without them**. Please bring a copy of your insurance card. After you are registered in the business office, you will be directed to the Radiology Department.

An important note

Be sure to tell your physician or technologist if you are pregnant, on any blood-thinning medications, allergic to any medicines or if you have had an allergic reaction to contrast media (dye solution) before.

What will happen during your exam?

- Upon entering the Radiology Services Department, you will be under the care of a physician, nurse and one or two radiologic technologists; they will try to make you as comfortable as possible during your exam
- Your technologist will ask you to lie on your stomach during the exam
- After your lower back is cleaned with a soothing antiseptic, the physician will inject a local anesthetic, which may sting
- After a small area of your lower back is numb, the physician will inject contrast media through a different needle into the spinal canal (this may cause some pressure against your back); after the injection, the needle is removed
- The X-ray films then will be taken
- The radiologist may ask you to lie in different positions during the exam to get different views of your spine (the table on which you are lying also may be tilted downward—this may be uncomfortable)
- You may experience some discomfort and a minor headache
- After the X-ray films have been taken, you will be admitted to the Radiology Nursing Unit for observation for four to six hours
- You will be given a meal and liquids while under observation during this time

What happens after the exam?

- If you are an outpatient, you will need to have someone take you home and stay with you for 24 hours
- Be careful to follow all instructions given by your physician and technologist

continued

- Your physician can discuss with you how to prevent occasional headaches, which are not uncommon following a myelogram
- Plan to keep your head up higher than your hips for the whole day (i.e., partially reclining)

How do I get the results?

The radiologist will study your exam and give a report to your physician. Your physician should discuss these results with you to make sure you understand what they mean and how the results affect your health. Occasionally, additional tests or treatment may be recommended if you are experiencing bleeding, fever or persistent headache.

We hope you are pleased with the care you receive in the Radiology Department. Our goal is to give you the very best care and attention.

*For more information, please call Patient Scheduling at **(864) 455-7774** or visit us online at **ghs.org/radiology**.*