

Patient Information

Myelogram

What is a Myelogram?

Myelography is the name that doctors use for taking pictures of the inside of the spine. This requires injection of a dye containing iodine into the middle of the spine where there is a clear watery fluid (cerebrospinal fluid, or CSF) which surrounds the spinal cord and communicates with the same fluid that is both inside and around the brain.

Preparation

For a morning appointment, no food after midnight, but continue to drink clear fluids.

For an afternoon appointment, restrict yourself to clear fluids from 7am, after breakfast.

It is important to contact us and let us know if you:

- Are taking any blood thinning medications or have an iodine allergy prior to the appointment.
- Have a history of epilepsy
- Are currently taking any medication for depression, anxiety or other mental illness
- Are or there is a possibility of pregnancy
- Have had a previous reaction to iodine.

On the day of your procedure you will be admitted to Day Stay under your private health insurance. You will need to present to admissions on Level 1 and our porters will bring you down from the ward on a bed.

The hospital requires you to have someone pick you up and drive you home once you are discharged. Public transport is not acceptable. *Should your circumstances be that you do not have anyone to accompany you, please contact us immediately to discuss.*

How long will it take?

The procedure usually takes about forty five (45) minutes. You will however remain in the day surgery area for up to 4 hours post procedure for observation.

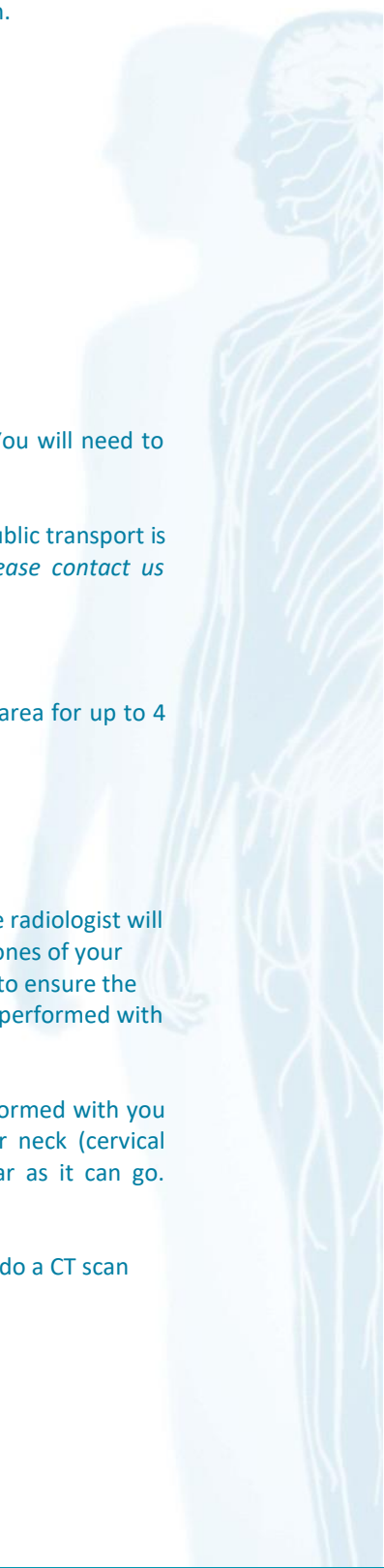
What to expect

You will be moved into our x-ray room and asked to lie face down on the table.

The region over the spine will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution and covered with sterile drape. The radiologist will inject the area with a local anaesthetic to numb the skin. A very thin needle is positioned between the bones of your spine into the spinal canal. The dye is carefully injected while the radiologist watches on an x-ray screen to ensure the dye goes into the correct position. Once the dye is injected, the needle is removed and a series of x-rays performed with you in different positions.

If we are performing a myelogram of your lower back (lumbar myelogram), most of the x-rays are performed with you lying on your stomach or standing upright on the tilting table. If we are performing x-rays of your neck (cervical myelogram) you will have to lie in a fairly uncomfortable position with your head tilted back as far as it can go. Myelograms of the neck are not the easiest to tolerate, mainly because of this difficult position.

Following this part of the test and after the needle has been removed, we move you to another room to do a CT scan while the dye is in place to provide extra information about your nerves and spine.



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After Your Examination

A porter will return you to the NSPH Day Ward where they will observe you for up to four (4) hours, after which you will be free to leave.

For your comfort it is recommended you:

- Take it easy for the next forty-eight (48) hours
- No heavy lifting for forty-eight (48) hours.
- Resume your normal activities gradually

Possible Side-Effects and Complications

In general, this is a very safe procedure, but there are some potential complications that may occur.

The main ones include:

- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting

And Very Rarely:

- Infection
- Seizures
- Bleeding
- Damage to nerves
- Allergic reaction to contrast

If you develop a headache after the test it should settle with Panadol. The headache should not persist more than overnight, but if it does, or you have other symptoms which are usual for you, either phone your doctor or phone North Shore Radiology and Nuclear Medicine on (02) 9170 4500 during office hours to speak with our nurses.

Questions?

You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions of the technicians or radiologist at the time of your procedure, however if you have any queries prior to the appointment, please feel free to contact us by phone or email – 02 9170 4500 or contact@nsrnm.com.au

If you have any questions regarding **why** the myelogram is required, these should be directed to your specialist or the doctor looking after you. We are happy to re-schedule your booking so you can discuss it with your doctor.

