



# Discogram

## Diagnostic Imaging

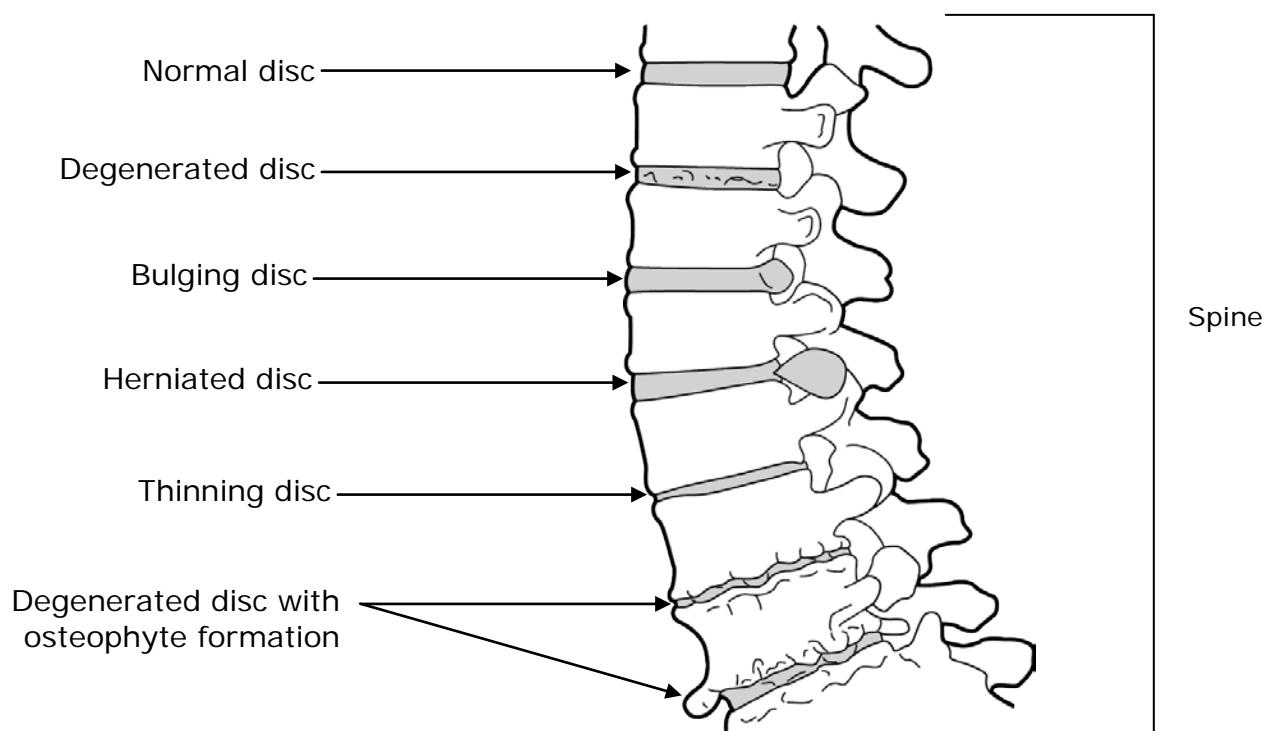
### Hamilton General Hospital

905-521-2100, ext. 46514

---

## What is a discogram?

A discogram is a special x-ray of the discs in your spine. The discs are like small cushions between the backbones. The discogram lets the doctor know if your back pain could be coming from your disc.



## Before the procedure

- Do not eat 4 hours before the procedure. If you have diabetes and take medications for diabetes, call the booking clerk at 905-521-2100, ext. 46514.
- Your referring doctor may give you special instructions about which medications to take before your procedure.
- Let us know if you could be pregnant as x-rays will be taken.
- Bring a list of your medications to your appointment.
- If you are not able to speak or understand English, bring an interpreter with you.
- **Arrange to have a ride home.**

### Medication

- If you take blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin®), heparin, Plavix®, Aggrenox® or Ticlid®:
    - Ask the doctor who prescribed these medications for instructions on any changes that are needed before your procedure.
    - If you are taking warfarin, your referring doctor will stop this medication several days before your procedure. During this time, you may be switched to another medication.
    - If you have not heard from your referring doctor one week before your procedure, please call his or her office.
  - Stop taking ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) 5 days before your procedure.
-

## When you first arrive for your procedure

Go to the reception desk in the Diagnostic Imaging Department on the Main Level.

You will:

- change into a patient gown
- talk with the nurse about any pain that you are having, medications you are taking and your activity level

Your doctor will explain the risks and benefits of this procedure. Ask your doctor questions before you sign the consent form if you do not understand the risks and benefits.

## During the procedure

- You will lie on your stomach on the x-ray table. This will make it easier for the doctor to put the needle into the disc.
- You will be asked questions about what you are feeling. This helps to find out where your back pain is coming from.
- Freezing will be injected into your back by a small needle that may sting or burn. The doctor watches an x-ray screen to guide a longer needle into your back and into the disc. This needle is used to put x-ray dye into the disc space. The x-ray dye outlines the disc so the x-ray picture can be taken.
- Usually you will not feel any pain if the disc is normal. If there is a problem with your disc, you may feel pain like your usual back pain.
- If you are allergic to x-ray dye or iodine you must tell the doctor and staff before the procedure.

## After the procedure

- You will be taken to Endoscopy & Day Procedures for 1 ½ hours to 4 hours. Bring a book or some activity to help pass the time.
- You must have someone take you home. You cannot drive or take a city bus home.

**If you have had sedation, do not drive a vehicle, operate heavy equipment or drink alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure.**

## When you get home

- **Do not** drive a vehicle, operate heavy equipment or drink alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure if you have been sedated.
- **Do not** soak in a bathtub, swimming pool or hot tub for 24 hours after the procedure.
- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Take your usual medication.
- Use an ice pack wrapped in a towel for discomfort. Keep the ice pack on for only 20 minutes every hour, if needed for the next several hours.

## Call your family doctor if you have:

- a headache that lasts or increases in severity for 48 hours
- a fever greater than 38.0°C or 100.4°F
- redness at the injection site
- severe back pain
- Over the next 1 to 2 weeks, if you notice any increase in back pain or have a fever (more than 38°C or 100.4°F), call your doctor right away. A disc could be infected, although this happens very rarely.