

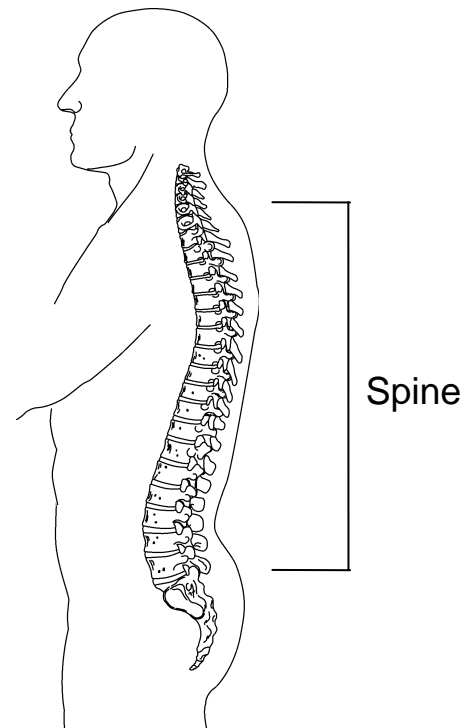


Myelogram

Diagnostic Imaging
Hamilton General Hospital
905-521-2100, ext. 46514

What is a Myelogram?

A myelogram is a special x-ray of your spine, where x-ray dye is placed in the fluid surrounding the spinal cord. It is done to help find the cause of pain, numbness or weakness in the back, arm or legs. A myelogram may also be done to find a tumor, an infection, problems with the spine such as a herniated disc, or narrowing of the spinal canal caused by arthritis.



Before your procedure

- Drink 8 cups of water before 2:00 am.
- Eat a light meal, breakfast or lunch within a few hours of your appointment.
- Let us know if you could be pregnant as x-rays will be taken.
- **Arrange to have a ride home.** You will be in the Diagnostic Imaging Department for at least 2 hours.
- If you are not able to speak or understand English, bring an interpreter with you.

Medication

- Take all of your medications unless you have special instructions from your doctor.
 - Bring a list of your medications to your appointment.
 - If you take anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medication, please call our Booking Department at ext. 46514.
 - If you have diabetes and take insulin, do not change your normal eating patterns and take your usual insulin.
 - 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.
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When you first arrive for your procedure

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

You will:

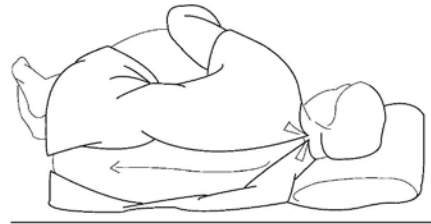
- change into a patient gown
- talk with the nurse about any pain that you are having, medications you are taking and your activity level

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 be asked to lie on your stomach or side during the procedure.

The doctor will freeze the centre of your lower back (called the lumbar spine) and place a small needle into your spinal canal, so that the dye can be put in. You may feel a slight pressure or a slight pain down one or the other leg.



X-rays are then taken to outline the spinal cord and nerve roots. You may be asked to stand for some of the same pictures.

If you are allergic to x-ray dye or iodine, tell the x-ray staff before your test.

After the myelogram you may have a CT scan of your spine.

After the procedure

You will stay in Diagnostic Imaging for at least 2 hours.

When you get home

- Rest with your head elevated on a couple of pillows for the next 24 hours.
- Do not do strenuous activities, such as lifting weights, moving furniture, shoveling or mowing the lawn, for the next 48 hours.
- Do not soak in a tub bath, swimming pool or hot tub for the next 24 hours.
- Drink lots of fluids. If you have a headache, fluids with caffeine (coffee, tea or cola) may help.
- You may feel some discomfort at the needle site and have a minor headache. You may take pain medication if needed.
- Call your doctor right away if there is leaking from the needle site.

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