Care Gram

Lumbar Puncture

Welcome
Welcome to Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Radiology Department. Your doctor has requested a lumbar puncture (spinal tap). This test uses images produced by special equipment and shown on a screen, to remove a small amount of cerebrospinal fluid for testing from the lumbar region of your back. Cerebrospinal fluid is a clear, colorless liquid that delivers nutrients to the spine and brain. This fluid also acts as a cushion to help prevent injury.

Your test will be performed by a radiologist (doctor with special training in diagnosis by X-ray).

How the Test Works
This test measures the amount of fluid pressure in the spinal canal. The sample of cerebrospinal fluid is obtained and analyzed in the laboratory.

Allowing Time
The test usually takes around 45 minutes. You will be asked to remain for one to two hours after your test.

Preparation
If you are taking blood-thinning medication, ask your doctor about stopping the use of these drugs prior to the lumbar puncture. You should stop taking the following medication prior to your test:

- Aspirin, Motrin® or other NSAIDS – Stop taking this medication 7 days prior to your test.
- Coumadin® – Stop taking this medication 5 days prior to your test.
- Plavix® – Stop taking this medication 7 days prior to your test.
- Xarelto® – Stop taking this medication for 7 days prior to your test.
- Eliquis® – Stop taking this medication for 5 days prior to your test.
- Lovenox® – Stop taking this medication for 24 hours prior to your test.
- Heparin® – Stop taking this medication for 4 hours prior to your test.

Check with our doctor if you are taking a blood-thinning medication not on this list. Also, you will be required to have a lab test prior to the procedure to evaluate the blood coagulation. Report to the Radiology Department one hour prior to your scheduled test for blood work.

Licking Memorial
Health Systems

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Your Role on the Day of the Test

1. Relax during the test.
2. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, let your doctor know before the test begins.

Registering

Please report directly to the Licking Memorial Hospital First Floor Registration area 20 minutes prior to the start of your scheduled test. Bring your photo ID, insurance cards, and medication list.

During the Lumbar Puncture

- You will be asked to remove your clothing and wear a gown. The radiologist will explain the test to you. He/she will speak with you about the possible risks and benefits. You will be asked to sign a consent for the test.
- You will lie face down on your stomach for this test. The radiologist may ask the technologist to place a pillow underneath your stomach.
- The spinal area will be cleaned with Betadine. The area then will be numbed with a local anesthetic.
- A fluoroscope (a device used to view structures inside the body) will be used to guide the needle through the skin between two lumbar vertebrae and into the spinal canal.
- You may be asked to change positions slightly to measure fluid pressures.
- A small amount of fluid is withdrawn through the needle to be tested in the Laboratory.
- The needle is removed.
- Pressure may be applied to prevent any bleeding and the opening in the skin will be covered with a bandage.

After the Test

- You will be asked to lie with your head elevated no higher than 45 degrees for one to two hours after your test to lower your chance of getting a headache.
- You will be monitored by a Radiology nurse and allowed to drink and/or eat while you are resting.

Finding Out the Results

The radiologist will study your test and give the findings to your doctor. Your doctor will talk with you about the results.

Reminder

- If you have any questions about your test, please call (220) 564-4710.
- Report to the Licking Memorial Hospital First Floor Registration area 20 minutes before your test. Bring photo ID, insurance cards, and medication list.

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This Care Gram is for information purposes only. It may become out-of-date over time. Ask a doctor or a healthcare professional about your specific condition.