

SPINE PROCEDURE INFORMATION

CENTER FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT – 3200 WESTHILL

LUMBOSACRAL DISCOGRAPHY

Description of procedure: Your doctor has requested this procedure because you have back and/or leg pain. Discography is used to determine the source of symptoms in anticipation of surgery. It is also used to verify the painful disk level when other diagnostic tests show multiple abnormal disks. Usually, discography is performed when conservative (non-operative) treatment has failed, and noninvasive tests (such as MRI) have not provided sufficient diagnostic information.

The procedure takes about 60 minutes. You will lie on your stomach with a cushion under your abdomen. Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic soap, and then numbed with a local anesthetic. It may be necessary to shave a small area. Using fluoroscopy, the radiologist will pass one needle at a time into each of the appropriate disks. The longest part of the procedure is needle placement.

After all the needles are positioned correctly, contrast material (iodine dye) is injected into each disk, one at a time, and your pain response is recorded. If this test provokes pain, you will be asked to grade its severity on a scale of 0 to 10. You will also be asked if the pain is the same as your usual symptoms. The purpose of discography is to see whether intradiscal injection provokes the EXACT pain that you usually experience. This test may elicit pain that is different from your typical symptoms, or it may elicit no pain at all. After the discogram, you will have a CT scan to demonstrate any disk abnormalities that become outlined by the injected contrast material.

Following discography, you may experience worsening of symptoms for several hours. You should minimize activity during this time. Continue bed rest or light duties as tolerated for 24 hours. DO NOT do any strenuous exercise, house work or heavy lifting for 24 hours. You can leave the hospital immediately if you have someone who can help you. If you have questions or concerns, please call your doctor or one of the radiologists.

Risks associated with this procedure: Discography is an invasive procedure. Complications are infrequent but possible. The most important complication is infection of the disk (discitis), occurring in 0.1-0.2% of patients. Depending on your allergies to medications, antibiotics may be used during the procedure. Other risks include bleeding, spinal headache, damage to nerves or disks, and allergic reaction to the x-ray dye or other medications. Pain will be temporarily worsened after the procedure.

Before your procedure, a radiologist will answer any questions.

IMPORTANT:

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| • Are you allergic to x-ray dye (contains iodine)? | Yes | No |
| • Do you have diabetes? | Yes | No |
| • Do you take coumadin or another blood thinner? | Yes | No |
| • Are you being treated for an infection? | Yes | No |
| • Is it possible that you are pregnant? | Yes | No |

Patient _____

DOB _____

Patient Signature _____

Date _____