Myelogram

About the test
A myelogram is a special x-ray test used to view the space around your spinal cord. It is done to check for problems affecting the spinal cord and nerves. There are two parts to this test. The first part is done in the fluoroscopy department where you will get an injection of contrast into your spine. Once this is complete, you will have a computed tomography (CT) scan to show detailed pictures of your spine and to help look into the problem you are having.

Important to tell us
- **Tell the doctor or radiology technologist if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.**
- Tell your doctor about the medicines you take, including prescription and over the counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, or other herbal supplements.
- **If you have ever had an allergy to IV contrast medicine**, tell your doctor before having this test. Your doctor may order a different test or you may need to take additional medicines.

To prepare for the test
- **If you take a blood thinner** or medicine to thin your blood, talk to your doctor about when to stop taking the medicine before the test. Not talking to your doctor about this could result in your test being cancelled or rescheduled. These medicines include:
  - Warfarin (Coumadin, Jantoven)
  - Aspirin with dipyridamole (Aggrenox)
  - Heparin
  - Cilostazol (Pletal)
  - Prasugrel (Effient)
  - Clopidogrel (Plavix)
  - Ticlopidine (Ticlid)
  - Dalteparin (Fragmin)
  - Tinzaparin (Innohep)
  - Dipyridamole (Persantine)
  - Foundaparinux (Arixtra)
  - Enoxaparin (Lovenox)
  - Rivaroxaban (Xarelto)
  - Dabigatran (Pradaxa)
  - Apixaban (Eliquis)
  - Tirofiban (Aggrastat)
  - Eptifibatide (Integrilin)
  - Abciximab (ReoPro)
  - Persantine (Dipyridamole)
  - Ticagrelor (Brilinta)
• If you have diabetes and take Metformin (Glucophage, Fortamet, Glucophage XR, Glumetza, Riomet) or any medicine with Metformin in it:
  ‣ Do not take this medicine the morning of your test.
  ‣ Restart the medicine on the third day or 48 hours after the test, unless you have been told differently by your doctor.
  ‣ Ask your doctor if you need additional blood work before this test.
• If you are 50 years of age or older, you will need blood work done within 30 days of your test date. Please check with your doctor’s office for instructions and lab orders. Lab orders required include prothrombin time (PT), international normalized ratio (INR), partial thromboplastin time (PTT), and a platelet count.
• If you have blood work done at a location outside of Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center, please bring a copy of the results with you to the test.
  • If you take blood thinning medicines or have a blood disorder, you will need blood work the day of the test. Please get lab orders for PT, INR, PTT, and a platelet count from your doctor.
  • If blood work is needed before the test, please arrive 2 hours before your test time to allow for collection and results to come back.
  • Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your test. If you have an afternoon appointment you must not have anything to eat or drink for at least 4 hours before your test.

Day of the test
• You may take your regular medicines, except for blood thinners and Metformin, with a sip of water.
• Wear comfortable, loose clothing without snaps or zippers for the test.
• Do not wear jewelry. This includes watches, wedding bands, and any form of piercing.
• Bring a list of your medicines and allergies to give to the technologist when you arrive.
• Bring your insurance card and photo ID with you to the hospital.
• Have an adult with you to take you home after the test. For your safety, you may not drive yourself home, go home alone, or use public transportation without someone to go with you.
• Plan to be at the hospital for 5 hours. You will have a myelogram and a CT scan during your visit, and need recovery time after both tests.
• You will need to go to University Hospital’s Radiology Registration on the 2nd floor of Doan Hall to check in.
• If you have already had blood work done or do not need it, you should arrive 30 minutes before your appointment time.
• If you are taking blood thinning medicines or have a blood disorder, you will need blood work on the day of the test. To have this done, you must arrive 2 hours before your appointment time.
• If you are late for your scheduled appointment time, you may be asked to reschedule, especially if you need a blood test.
During the test

- You will be helped onto the x-ray table in the fluoroscopy department and asked to lie on your stomach.
- The radiologist, a doctor who specializes in radiology, will clean off an area on your back with a cleaning solution. Sterile towels will be placed on your back to keep this area clean.
- For your comfort, a local anesthetic or numbing medicine called lidocaine will be injected into this area. Please let the doctor or nurse know if you have an allergy to this medicine. The numbing medicine may burn like a bee sting for a few seconds.
- The radiologist will put a needle in between the bones or vertebrae of your back. If you feel discomfort, tell the doctor where and how it hurts.
- Breathe slowly and deeply. Relax and try not to move.
- After the needle is in place, a small sample of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) will be taken from around your spinal cord and will be sent to the lab for testing.
- Where the spinal fluid was taken, contrast will be inserted into your back. Contrast is a medicine that allows the area around your spine to be seen using x-rays.
- At the end of the test, the needle will be removed and a Band-Aid placed over the site. This part of the test takes about 1 hour.

CT scan

- You will have a CT scan after the myelogram. This is an x-ray test that has a special computer and scanner. It shows cross-sections of your body. It will take about 15 to 20 minutes.
- Before the CT scan, a technologist will ask you to roll your body from side to side 3 or 4 times to help move the contrast material through your spinal canal. This is the area around your spinal cord.

After the tests

- For your safety, you must stay in the hospital for up to 2 hours after your test. You will be checked often during this time.
- Test results will be sent to your doctor, who will share the results with you.
- When you go home, you need to sit in bed with your head up for 6 to 8 hours.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of liquid, especially water and drinks without caffeine, over the next 24 hours to replace the fluid removed during the test. This will also reduce the chance of a headache and remove the contrast medicine from your body.
- If you have a headache, take a non-prescription pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Follow the directions on the product’s label for use.
- Have a family member or friend stay with you for the next 24 hours.
- Rest and limit your activity for the next 24 hours. Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or make important decisions during this time.
When to call your doctor

Although problems from this test are rare, they can happen. Call your doctor right away if you have any of these signs:

- Severe headache
- Numbness, loss of feeling, or problems with movement in your arms or legs
- Feel confused or less alert
- Swelling, warmth, or redness at the needle injection site
- Bleeding that will not stop at the injection site
- Drainage of a clear fluid at the injection site
- Seizure or convulsions
- Weakness
- Vomiting that will not stop

If your doctor is not available and you are having problems, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

If you have any questions before your test or you need to reschedule your appointment, please call Radiology Scheduling at 614-293-4333.