

Lumbar Puncture

What is a Lumbar Puncture?

A lumbar puncture, also called a spinal tap, is a procedure where a small amount of fluid is removed from the space around the spinal cord and sent for laboratory testing. The fluid is tested to diagnose certain diseases.

To Prepare

- A responsible adult will need to come with you to drive you home.
- Do not eat solid food for 4 hours before the test.
- If you are taking blood thinners, please hold as instructed. If you have any questions about this please call 419-563-9342.
- You will be asked to have blood work completed, please do this the day of the procedure.
- No alcohol for 24 hours before the procedure.

What to Expect

- Once you have registered, you will be directed to the radiology department.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown for the procedure.
- The radiologist will talk to you before the procedure and answer any questions you may have.
- During the procedure, you will lie on an x-ray table. You will be positioned on either your stomach or your side.
- A small area of your back will be cleaned with betadine and covered with a sterile drape.
- The doctor will inject the site with numbing medicine, this may cause a temporary stinging sensation.
- Once numbed, the radiologist will put a needle between the vertebrae into the spinal canal.
- If you feel any pain, tell the doctor where and how it hurts. You should feel pressure but no pain.
- Once the spinal canal is reached, fluid is removed.
- After samples are collected, the needle will then be removed and a band-aid will be applied to the site.
- If indicated, a blood draw may be completed at the time of the procedure.

After the Procedure

- You may be asked to lay flat on your back for approximately 1 hour before being discharged home.
- For the next 24 hours, you should lie down with your head slightly elevated as much as possible.
- Resume your regular diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- No alcohol for 24 hours after the procedure.
- The most common problems are headache and nausea. These are usually mild and pass within 48 hours.
- You will be given further instructions at time of discharge.
- Results from any fluid testing will be sent to your doctor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the radiology department staff or contact your doctor.

Bucyrus Hospital

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Galion Hospital

269 Portland Way S, Galion
419-468-4841

Ontario Hospital

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