

Having a Lumbar Puncture (Radiology guided)

Patient information leaflet

**If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.**

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Introduction

This leaflet has been given to you to help you understand your Lumbar puncture and has been prepared by the staff in the X-Ray Department. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to know about alternative treatment after you have read this, please speak to the specialist team who referred you for your Lumbar Puncture.

A Lumbar Puncture (LP) is a procedure used to obtain a sample of Cerebro Spinal Fluid (CSF). CSF is the fluid that bathes and protects the brain and spinal cord. It is produced constantly, so that the small amount removed during a LP is quickly replaced.

Why do a Lumbar puncture?

CSF testing can provide your doctors with information about how the brain and spinal cord is working. When this is combined with a history, examination and scan results, an LP may help diagnose a wide range of neurological conditions.

Why do I need to have my treatment under X-ray guidance?

In some patients lumbar punctures are sometimes required to be completed under X-ray guidance due to a variety of conditions which make it more complicated. Using X-ray guidance allows the clinician to accurately perform the procedure using images of the spine.

The doctor performing the procedure (Radiologist) specialises in using minimal amounts of X-rays. They will only use X-rays for a short time. Using the X-ray machine will make the procedure faster as the doctor can see where the needle is using the X-rays.

Pregnancy

If you are, or think you could be pregnant, please contact us prior to your appointment on the phone number in your appointment letter.

Who will I see on the day

Who will be performing the procedure?

An Interventional Radiologist (a Doctor who specialises in Lumbar Punctures) will perform the procedure, a doctor who specialises in such procedures; they will be assisted throughout the procedure by Radiology Nurses and Radiographers. As the procedure happens in the Interventional theatre all members of staff will be dressed in scrub tops. All members of staff will introduce themselves before the start of the procedure.



Where is the procedure performed?

The procedure will take place in the Radiology Department in a special “screening room” designed specially for this type of procedure.



What to expect

What happens if I decide to have a Lumbar puncture?

You will be asked to sign a consent form before the procedure is performed. Blood samples will be taken before the procedure. The entire procedure usually takes about 30 minutes to an hour. You will be advised to lie on your back for another hour or two post-procedure. You will be monitored by a nurse throughout this time.

After that you may sit up and you will be encouraged to have plenty to drink. You are advised not to drive after the procedure and are required to have someone to take you home and stay with you overnight. You should be able to drive the next day if you feel well.

You should take things easily for a couple of days, take plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and heavy lifting. Plenty of rest is advised to avoid headaches.

How is a Lumbar puncture performed?

You will usually be asked to lay on your left side on a bed with your knees curled up to your stomach. The skin of your lower back is then cleaned with an antiseptic. The antiseptic feels wet and cold. A local anaesthetic is then used to numb the skin. You may feel a stinging sensation before the local anaesthetic begins to work.

You may then feel a pushing sensation as the needle is inserted and sometimes a brief, sharp pain when the needle is moved forward. This pain should stop in a few seconds. It is important to lie still. Overall, discomfort is minimal to moderate.

Side effects & Risks

What are the side-effects and risks?

One of the most common side-effects is headache. This is known as a post-LP headache and is caused by the removal of CSF. This occurs in up to half of patients. Typically, the headache starts 1-2 days after the LP and symptoms are usually worse when standing up and may be eased by lying down. You may also feel sick or dizzy. These symptoms usually settle after a few days but may persist for over a week.

If you experience a post-LP headache, you should lie down and rest. You should also try to keep drinking fluid, especially drinks containing caffeine such as tea, coffee and cola. Simple painkillers such as Paracetamol may be helpful, but please ensure that you do not exceed the maximum dose stated on the packet. You should not usually need to seek medical aid. If your symptoms are not settling after 3 days contact the ward where the procedure took place (see contact details section).

Another common side-effect is backache. This is known as a post-LP backache. This occurs in up to a third of patients and is usually mild and settles over a few days. Simple painkillers are often helpful.

Very rarely, an infection may develop after a LP and this can be serious. If you develop a fever you should also contact the ward where your procedure took place. They will be able to give you advice and if required arrange an urgent appointment with one of our doctors.

Very rarely, a LP can cause damage to the nerves in the back. If you develop numbness or tingling in the legs, you should again contact the ward.

If you experience any of the following you must seek immediate medical advice:

- Increasing pain not controlled by pain killers
- Increasing swelling, redness or bleeding at the puncture site
- Feeling unwell (dizziness, fainting, temperature over 38 °C)

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to call the Radiology Department via the number given on your appointment letter.

As this is a teaching hospital there may be students and observers present during your examination as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance.

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