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# Lumbar Puncture (LP)

# Parent/Patient advice leaflet

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

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## What is a lumbar puncture?

A lumbar puncture (LP) is a procedure that is performed to collect a small amount of fluid called Cerebro-Spinal Fluid (CSF) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. This is done to look for signs of infection such as meningitis.

## Why does my baby need a lumbar puncture?

A lumbar puncture is done to help us exclude meningitis as a possible cause of infection; either because baby appears unwell or as part of a routine screen for sepsis. Your baby will already be on antibiotics to treat any possible infection, but knowing if there is evidence of meningitis will help us decide how long baby needs antibiotics for as well as helping us to choose the right antibiotic.

## How is it done?

It is like having a blood test, except that a needle is put into baby's back in between the bones of the spine to get the fluid. To do this, baby is held in a curled up position. Their skin is cleaned with antiseptic solution and the sample is taken with a needle using a sterile technique. The needle is then removed and a special sealing solution (Spray plaster) is applied to the area.



## Are there any risks?

A lumbar puncture is a very safe procedure and complications are very rare. In some cases, even with very experienced doctors, the procedure is not always successful. In these cases, your doctor will discuss with you what needs to happen next.

There is always a risk of infection with any procedure, but this risk is extremely low as a lumbar puncture is performed under sterile conditions.

Sometimes there may be some bleeding or discomfort at the site of the test. The risk of nerve damage is extremely low when the procedure is performed correctly.

## How long will the results take?

Usually, the preliminary results are available after a few hours. The final result takes 48 hours and baby will remain on antibiotics at least until the final result is available. The antibiotics may then carry on for a longer period if the results suggest meningitis.