

# Lumbar puncture

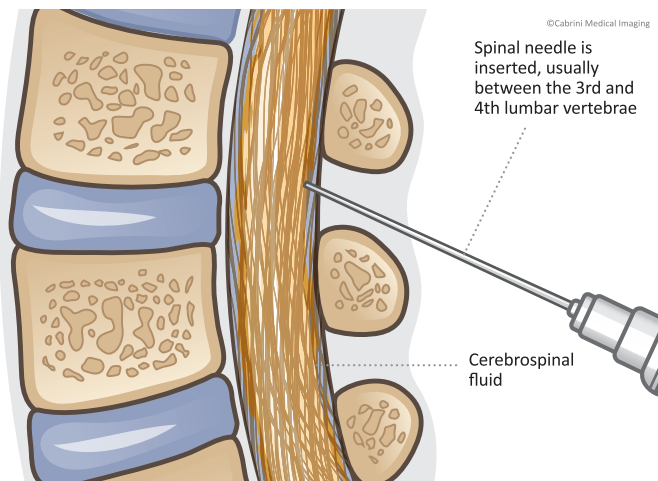
## What is a lumbar puncture?

Lumbar puncture refers to the procedure where a sample of cerebrospinal fluid is obtained, so that it can be sent to pathology for testing.

It can also be used to measure the pressure of the cerebrospinal fluid, and can also be done to remove excess spinal fluid.

For patients requiring an intrathecal injection as per your doctor's request, medication will be injected into the intrathecal space while the lumbar puncture needle is in place.

It is important you read the following information so that you will be able to consent to have this procedure done. If you have any further questions you will be given an opportunity to ask nursing or medical staff on the day.



## Before you come in for the procedure

You will be contacted by the medical imaging department with a date and time for your procedure and you will be asked to go to the admissions department one hour prior to your appointment time, as you will be admitted to the hospital as a 'day case'. This does not mean you will be in the hospital for the whole day.

You will be given instructions by Cabrini Medical Imaging. Please take note of the following and contact the department on the number below if you have any concerns.

- If you are on any blood thinning medication, please make sure you let staff know as soon as possible, as this could affect the ability to do your procedure. Please check with your GP if unsure of your medication.

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- On the day of your procedure please bring a list of your current medications (this includes over-the-counter medications, and herbal remedies)
- Please make sure you have someone to drive you home (you are not permitted to drive until the following day)

## How your lumbar puncture will proceed, +/- intrathecal injection

From the admissions department, you will be taken to the medical imaging department where you will be prepared for your procedure, and taken to the appropriate room.

At this point you have an opportunity to ask one of the nursing staff further questions or to speak to the doctor performing the injection.

You will then be positioned on the table where the procedure is to be done. You will normally be asked to lie on your side. Once you are lying on the table, it is very important that you remain still for the rest of the procedure.

After washing your skin with antiseptic, a small amount of local anaesthetic will be injected under the skin in the relevant area; this may sting for a moment. The doctor will then place the needle into the correct position, using an x-ray machine as guidance.

Where a lumbar puncture is requested, once the needle is in the correct position, the doctor will collect the sample of spinal fluid. Occasionally the doctor may also need to take a sample of blood from your arm to assist in the diagnosis of some illnesses.

Where an intrathecal injection is requested, when the needle is in position the medication will be injected into the intrathecal space, this may or may not be after having some of the spinal fluid collected.

You will then be taken to the recovery area, where you will need to rest, lying flat while being monitored for up to four hours.

**As with all medical procedures there are associated risks and complications with having this procedure done, they can be broken down into common, rare and very rare.**

## Common risks and complications

- Discomfort to the area, following the injection. This maybe due to the tissues being aggravated by the procedure.
- Headache, requiring analgesia and bed rest
- Bleeding or bruising to the localised area

### Rare risks and complications

- More severe headache, requiring bed rest for a number of days, or may require further medical treatment
- Infection, which may require antibiotic treatment
- The procedure may have to be abandoned due to technical or medical reasons
- Allergy to medications used during this procedure

### Very rare risks and complications

- Permanent nerve damage, leading to paralysis
- Damage to the spinal cord requiring surgery and other treatment

### How do I get my results?

Digital images are immediately available to your doctor and your records will be kept permanently. This occurs through a system called PACS. **If a priority report is requested it will be issued within two hours and faxed or emailed to your doctor, however this can sometimes take up to 24 hours.**

If your referring doctor wants to see you on the day of your examination, please advise the reception staff when you arrive for your appointment, so the appropriate information can be made available for you to take to your doctor.

### Important

**It is important to let us know when you make your booking if you are or think you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.**

It is important to bring with you your referral, previous x-rays and any other tests (only if previous ones were **not** done at Cabrini or I-MED).

### Questions

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the number below.