



## LUMBAR DISCOGRAM

**Reason for procedure:** Your doctor has requested this procedure because you have back and/or leg pain. Discography is used to determine the source of your symptoms in anticipation of surgery. It is also used to verify the painful disc when other diagnostic tests show multiple abnormal discs. Usually, discography is performed when conservative (non-operative) treatment has failed, and noninvasive tests (such as MRI) have not provided enough diagnostic information.

**Description of procedure:** The procedure takes about 60 minutes. You will lie on your stomach and your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic soap, and then numbed with a local anesthetic. Under fluoroscopic guidance, a needle will be passed, one at a time into each of the discs being studied. After all the needles are positioned, a very small amount of contrast/ x-ray dye is injected into each disc, one at a time, and your pain response is recorded. If this test causes pain, you will be asked to grade its severity on a scale of 0 to 10. You will also be asked if the pain is the same as your usual symptoms. This is very important. The purpose of this procedure is to see whether injecting directly into the disc causes the exact pain that you usually experience. Also important is the morphology, or how the disc looks under x-ray, and the resistance of the injection. This test may cause pain that is different from your typical symptoms, or it may not cause pain at all. After the procedure, you will have a CT scan to view any other disc abnormalities that become outlined by the injected contrast dye.

**After the procedure:** You will be asked not to drive; however you can leave the office soon after the procedure if you have someone to drive you home. You may experience an increase in your symptoms for several hours. You should minimize activity during this time. Continue bed rest or light duties as tolerated for 24 hours. Do not do any strenuous exercise, housework or heavy lifting for 24 hours. If you have any questions or concerns call your doctor or our clinic.

**Risks associated with this procedure:** Discography is an invasive procedure. Complications are infrequent but possible. The most important complication is infection of the disk, occurring in 0.1 to 0.2% of patients. Other risks include: bleeding, spinal headache, damage to nerves or discs, and allergic reaction to the x-ray dye or other medications. Pain may be temporarily worsened after the procedure.

### IMPORTANT:

- Please call us 24 hours ahead of time if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment: (615) 771-8274.
- Please bring your most recent MRI or CT scans of your spine to the procedure.
- If your symptoms are mild, do not take pain medications before the procedure.
- If you answer “**Yes**” to any of the following questions, please tell us prior to the procedure:
  - \* Are you allergic to x-ray contrast/dye (contains iodine)?
  - \* Do you have diabetes?
  - \* Do you take Coumadin or other blood thinners?
  - \* Are you being treated for an infection?
  - \* If you are pregnant or think you could be pregnant.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK. THANK YOU