



## PREPARING FOR YOUR MYELOGRAM

Thank you for choosing the University of Virginia Health System for your health care. This information will give you important instructions and should answer many of your questions.

If you have other questions or concerns, please call your referring physician or:

From 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. the UVa Neuroradiology Division at (434) 982-3429 or  
toll free at 1-800-251-3627, ext 45213

After 4:30 p.m., call (434) 924-9400 and ask for the Neuroradiologist on call.

### WHAT IS A MYELOGRAM?

A myelogram is an important diagnostic test for a wide range of diseases affecting the spine, spinal cord, and nerve roots. A specially trained doctor, called a Radiologist, performs this procedure in the Radiology Department of the hospital. A routine myelogram may take 1-2 hours or more to complete.

### WHAT MUST BE DONE TO GET READY FOR THE TEST?

You will be given an appointment time by your referring physician or the clinic staff. Please plan to arrive 30 minutes before your appointment time.

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please notify us the day before your appointment by calling the numbers listed above.

You may eat solid foods up until 3 hours before your test. You may drink liquids up until your test. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages **24** hours prior to your test.

Leave all valuables at home or with someone you trust. You may be asked to remove jewelry from some areas of your body.

Loose fitting pants or shorts with elastic waistbands are recommended and can be worn during the test. Wear no clothing containing metal buttons, zippers or snaps. Clothing from waist up must be removed and you will be given a hospital gown to wear.

You will need to arrange for a family member or friend to drive you. **You may not drive yourself home.**

**ALLERGIES.** If you are allergic to iodine or x-ray contrast (dye), please call us at the number above. **Pre-medication is required for these allergies and must begin 13 hours before your appointment.**

(over)

## **WHAT ABOUT MY MEDICINES?**

The physician ordering your myelogram will give you a list of medications that you are to hold for 48 hours prior to your exam. If you are taking any of the medications that are on this list, and do not hold them for 48 hours before your myelogram, you will not be able to have your procedure done. Your appointment will need to be rescheduled.

Take any other prescribed medications as usual before coming to the hospital

If you currently take Coumadin, Ticlid or any medicine to "thin" your blood or to keep clots from forming, please call your referring physician or PCP and ask for further instructions in regards to holding this medication.

BRING ALL YOUR MEDICATIONS WITH YOU or write down the name, dose and the last time you took them.

## **TELL ME ABOUT THE MYELOGRAM**

You will be awake during the procedure. During the test, you will lie on your stomach on an x-ray table. The radiologist will wash your back or neck with an antiseptic solution. You will also be given a numbing injection that may sting for a few seconds. A needle will then be inserted into the spinal canal. Contrast dye will be injected and then the needle will be removed. X-rays will be taken in different positions. After the myelogram, you will be transported by stretcher to the CT scan area where additional pictures will be taken.

The entire procedure may take 1-2 hours or more.

## **WHERE DO I GO FOR THE TEST?**

Parking is available in the hospital parking lots, with handicapped access in Parking Garage East. Ask for free parking validation at the Department of Radiology reception desk. Come to the Hospital East Radiology Department Waiting Room to register. Please give the receptionist your name. You will then be given a consent form to read and sign. This consent form is necessary to proceed with the test.

## **WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER REGISTERING?**

After registering you will be taken to the test area. You will be given a hospital gown to wear and your vital signs (heart rate, BP, temperature, respirations) will be recorded. Your test will then be explained to you and you will have time to ask questions. Once we've answered all your questions, you will be transported by stretcher for your test.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MYELOGRAM?**

When the test is complete, a nurse or technologist will examine the puncture site. Your vital signs will be rechecked. Then you will be taken to CT to complete your exam.

You will be given discharge instructions about how to take care of yourself. You must have someone drive you home and take it easy for the rest of the day. Do not lie completely flat for 24 hours. When lying down, keep your head on at least 2 to 3 pillows. Resume your usual diet. Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcohol for the next 24 hours. Follow specific instructions regarding your medicines. The most common problems after myelogram are headache, nausea and vomiting. These are usually mild and temporary. If they become severe or if other symptoms develop you will be told how to contact us.