

**DEPARTMENT OF DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY AND NUCLEAR MEDICINE  
SECTION OF NEURORADIOLOGY**

**PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET  
MYELOGRAMS  
(Lumbar, Cervical, Thoracic and Total Spinal)**

**Indications for the Procedure:** A myelogram is an X-ray procedure used to check for problems of the spine. A myelogram may help determine the cause of back pain, weakness, or numbness and pain in the arms or legs.

**Description of the Procedure:** The patient is placed on his/her stomach on the X-ray table. The skin of the patient's back is cleaned with an antiseptic that contains iodine. With a small needle stick, the patient's skin and deeper tissues of the lower back are numbed with an anesthetic drug (numbing medicine). With X-ray guidance, a thin needle is placed in the lower part of the patient's back. Dye (contrast medium) is put through the needle into the space around the nerves and then the needle is removed. The X-ray table may be tilted to direct the flow of dye to various parts of the patient's spine for evaluation. X-ray pictures are then taken of the specific areas of the spine (neck, mid back, and/or lower back). At the end of the myelogram procedure, the tiny puncture mark in the back is covered with a Band-Aid. The patient will be immediately taken to the computed tomography (CT) scanner for CT scan images (pictures) of specific areas of the spine, while the contrast material is still present in the spinal canal. At the end of the CT scan, the patient will either be observed in the X-ray department for 1-4 hours or returned to his/her hospital room for observation.

**Risks of the Procedure:** Serious complications from this procedure are very rare. There may be headache from the needle puncture, injury to nerves, seizures or allergic reaction to the dye material, bleeding within the spine or back, injection of the contrast material into the wrong space in the spine, or local infection at the puncture site or in the spinal canal (meningitis).

**Alternatives to the Procedure:** Alternatives to the procedure include other spine imaging examinations such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or CT without putting dye in the spinal canal.

**Probable Consequences of Refusing the Procedure:** Consequences may include not being able to adequately determine the cause of the spinal problem, which may interfere with proper treatment and result in worsening of the patient's condition and further progression of symptoms.

**Person(s) Performing the Procedure:** The key portions of the procedure will be performed by an attending physician who is a member of the medical staff of Rush University Medical Center, or a fellow or resident in Neuroradiology who will be observed and supervised by a member of the medical staff. Residents and fellows are licensed physicians. Fellows have completed a residency in radiology and are in an approved post-residency training program. Residents are in training in an approved residency program. The parts of the procedures fellows or residents will perform will be based on their level of training and competence.