

Discogram

A discogram is a diagnostic procedure used to determine if spine pain is caused by one or more spinal discs. It is the only test available that shows whether a degenerative disc is causing your back or neck pain.

During the procedure, the doctor injects dye into the center of the disc. When the disc is injected, you may feel either pressure or pain. If you feel pain, the physician will ask you to rate this pain on a scale of 1 to 10 and to compare this feeling to the pain you've been experiencing. If the pressure injection into the disc causes the same spine pain you experience in life, this indicates that the disc is contributing to your pain. After each disc injection, images are taken with the fluoroscope to identify structural defects in the disc. Additional images may be obtained after the procedure with a CT scan. The discogram test helps to make a more precise spinal diagnosis and helps us direct surgery or interventional treatment to the true source for pain.

Although rare, risks of discography include infection, bleeding, allergic reaction to medications and spinal cord damage.

Before the Procedure

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or if you have any allergies, especially to medications, iodine or shellfish.
- If you are planning to have sedation, bring a driver and stop eating and drinking six hours before check-in, or as directed.

During the Procedure

The procedure is performed in the clinic.

To begin, an IV will be started for fluids, IV antibiotics and sedation medication. You will lie on a special X-ray table on your stomach with pillows for comfort. It is important to relax and remain as still as you can throughout the procedure.

The skin over the injection site will be cleaned with special antiseptic. This injection site may or may not be the same area where your pain is located. You may receive IV conscious sedation. The doctor will then numb the skin



and underlying tissue with a local anesthetic. Fluoroscopy (X-ray imaging) will be used to help your doctor direct the needles into the targeted discs. A contrast dye will be injected into the disc to create pressure and visualize the disc interior.

The doctor will ask you to rate your pain on a 1-10 scale as the dye is injected and to describe whether the pain on injection feels like your typical spine pain. If the disc is painful, the doctor will inject local anesthetic into the disc which should eliminate pain quickly. After the procedure, we will ask you to rate your pain prior to discharge from the facility to determine the response to the local anesthetic disc injection.

After the Procedure

The procedure usually takes less than one hour to perform. You should be able to leave about 30 minutes after your procedure. If you are planning to have sedation, you will need to have a responsible driver. Remember that you may need to have a CT scan right after the procedure at an outlying facility.

It is important to remember that the purpose of the discogram is to make a diagnosis and determine a future course of action. It is not a treatment and your chronic pain will not be treated by this procedure. It is possible that your pain will increase for two to four days following the test. Ice packs and medication may ease this post-procedure discomfort.

Ask your doctor when it is OK to return to work. Your doctor will advise you when to schedule a follow-up appointment to discuss the results of your procedure.

Still have questions? Call us at 763-537-6000 or visit our website, nuraclinics.com

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