

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

CERVICAL DISCOGRAM

How we do the procedure

A cervical discogram is done to determine if the disk degeneration or herniation seen on a CT or MRI scan is significant enough to require surgery or a procedure. It is performed on the right side of the neck to the side of the windpipe. You will be lying face down on the table with several pillows under your chest. Your neck will be cleansed with betadine and a sterile drape will cover the area. We will inject the skin with local anesthetic to make you more comfortable during the procedure. An x-ray (fluoroscopy) machine will be used to guide needle placement. A small needle is inserted at this location and advanced into the disk. Once we place the needle into the disks that we want to inject, we will inject a solution of contrast agent or dye and antibiotic so that we can see if the disk is severely degenerated and if the injection reproduces your pain. Occasionally, disks that do not show any significant herniation on scanning will be found on discogram to have an annular rupture (jelly donut like hole in the disk). Most of the time, we will also inject a normal disk as a control. Normal disks should cause no pain when injected. We will take photographs so that your surgeon can see the results.

What to expect

We will start an intravenous line so that we can give you intravenous fluids and medication to relax you. We must have you awake during the procedure so that you can tell us whether the injection into the disk reproduces your pain symptoms. Thus we will only lightly sedate you during the procedure. We will infuse antibiotics before and after the procedure in order to prevent any infection. We will also instruct you to take antibiotics, by mouth, at home.

Risks

The risks include bleeding, infection and a reaction to any of the medications used for the procedure. We use sterile technique and antibiotics to avoid infections. **If you are taking a "blood thinner" (anticoagulant), we will give you special instructions before the procedure to avoid excess bleeding.**

Safety Precautions

Since your ability to drive may be impaired for a few hours, we ask that you have someone drive you home.