

## INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

### LUMBAR DISCOGRAM

#### **H**ow we do the procedure

A **lumbar discogram** is done to determine if the disk degeneration or herniation seen on a CT or MRI scan is significant enough to require surgery. You will be lying in the prone position. A small needle is inserted at this location and advanced into the disk. An x-ray (fluoroscopy) machine will be used so that we can be sure of where the needle is placed. 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 usually take photographs of the procedure so that your surgeon can see the results. Most of the time, we will have you undergo a CT scan of the disks after the procedure to document the degree of disruption and whether an annular rupture is present.

#### **W**hat to expect

We will start an intravenous line so that we can give you intravenous fluids and medication to relax you. We will also give IV antibiotics to prevent any infection to the disc area. We will also prescribe antibiotics to take at home. 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.

#### **R**isks

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.

#### **S**afety Precautions

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