

Information for Patients and Carers

Myelogram



What is a myelogram?

A myelogram is an X-ray examination of your spinal cord and the spinal nerve roots.

As part of the examination a contrast agent (an X-ray dye) is used. A very small number of patients have an allergic reaction to the contrast agent.

Before your examination the radiographer will ask you a series of questions about your medical history, including any allergies you may have. This will help us assess if you are at risk of an allergic reaction.

This examination is performed by a radiologist and a radiographer. They will carry out your examination and the radiologist will produce a report for your referring clinician after your examination. An assistant will also be in the examination room during your myelogram.

Please inform us before you attend:

- If you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you are breast/chest feeding
- If you weigh over 28 stone (178kg)

If you feel you may need further assistance with transferring (including the use of a hoist).

If you require an interpreter, please inform us as soon as you receive your appointment letter and we will arrange an official interpreter for you.

Are there any special preparations required before the examination?

You may eat and drink as normal before this examination.

You will not be able to drive immediately after your examination so it will be necessary for someone to accompany you to the hospital and drive you home afterwards.

You will also need someone to stay with you for 24 hours following your myelogram.

Can I bring a relative or friend with me?

Anyone can accompany you to the hospital, but they will usually not be allowed into the room when you have your examination.

Please note that we do not have childcare facilities; if you need to bring your children with you, please bring along an adult who can supervise them while your examination is being done.

What happens when I arrive at the X-ray department?

When you arrive at the X-ray department, please book in at the reception desk where you will be asked to have a seat in the waiting area.

Before starting the examination, the radiographer will ask you to put on a hospital gown in the changing area.

When you are ready, they will take you through to the examination room.

Once in the room the radiographer will check some details with you and complete a checklist to ensure it is safe for you to have the barium.

The radiographer will explain the examination and answer any questions you may have.

The radiographer will then introduce you to the Radiologist who will explain the examination and answer any questions you may have. They will then ask you to sign a consent form.

What happens during the examination?

You will be asked to lie on the X-ray table on your left-hand side. The skin over your lower back will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and then covered with a sterile sheet. The radiologist will then inject a local anaesthetic solution to numb this area.

A fine needle will be introduced into the spinal canal and a small amount of contrast agent will slowly be injected. X-rays will be taken throughout this stage to ensure the needle is in the correct place and that the contrast agent is flowing into your spinal canal. Once the contrast agent is in the correct place the needle will be removed and a small dressing applied.



The X-ray table will then be tilted into different positions, and you will also be asked to move into certain positions whilst the Radiographer takes the necessary X-rays for the Radiologist.

What happens after the examination?

Commonly, as part of your myelogram, the radiologist also needs to perform a CT scan of your spine whilst the contrast agent is still in place within your spinal canal.

If this is necessary, we will assist you to the CT department where you will have your CT scan. Once this has been performed you may get dressed and leave the hospital.

Are there any side effects?

During the examination, you may develop a pain or an aching sensation in your legs.

If you are having a cervical myelogram (of your neck) you may develop pain in your arms and neck. The pain you experience may be more severe than your usual pain. This is not unusual and usually disappears after a few minutes.

Most patients have a mild headache the next morning which can be treated with your preferred pain relief medication. Although very rare, some patients may develop a severe headache and even vomiting for a few days after the examination.

The radiologist will explain the potential side effects in detail with you before your examination and will offer advice on the day on how to reduce the chance of these side effects from happening.

Are there any risks?

There are some small risks involved with X-rays but only the minimum amount of radiation is used to produce the images required.

We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations. This allows us to make an accurate diagnosis to help plan your care, therefore the benefits of having the X-ray far outweigh the radiation dose you will receive.

When will I receive the examination results?

The radiologist will report on your X-rays and CT scan after your visit which will be sent to the clinician who referred you for this examination. How you get your results depends on which clinician sent you for your myelogram examination.

You will be advised when you attend about how to receive this information. You will not be given your results on the day of the procedure.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact Royal Preston Hospital X-ray Department on **01772 522096**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

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All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you

come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk

Department: Radiology/Fluoroscopy

Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support

Production date: August 2025

Review date: August 2028

JR 1333 v1