
**THE CENTER FOR PAIN MEDICINE
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL**

LUMBAR DISCOGRAM

Instruction Sheet for Patients

Should I limit my activity or change my diet after the injection? No. Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, you may return to your usual activities and resume your normal diet immediately after the injection.

Are there any side effects caused by discogram?

- You may experience increased pain and pressure in your back with additional pain radiating down your lower extremities. This can last for several hours to several days and can be significantly greater than before the procedure. You can apply ice to the area for as long as 15 minutes, 3 – 4 times a day for localized pain.
- You may experience some dizziness during or soon after the injection and this is more common after injections in the neck.

Are there any restrictions after discogram? Yes. You should follow these restrictions:

- Do not drive for the remainder of the day
- Do not take a tub bath or soak in water (i.e. pool, hot tub) for 24 hours after the procedure
- Allow 3 days post-procedure before resuming physical therapy

What are the medications used for discogram?

- Lidocaine or bupivacaine are local anesthetics which are used to numb the area of injection; this numbness usually wears off within 2 - 6 hours
- Cefazolin or Clindamycin is an antibiotic injected into the disc
- Iopamidol, an x-ray contrast agent, is injected into the area to confirm correct placement.

When should I call my doctor? You should call us immediately if any of the following occur:

- If you experience swelling, redness, bleeding or discharge from the site of the injection
- If you have a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- If you experience new or worsening back or neck pain
- If you experience a new numbness or weakness in your arms or legs
- If you experience new difficulty with urination after the injection, like difficulty urinating or suddenly losing control of your bladder

- If you experience new difficulty with your bowel movements after the injection, like suddenly losing control of your bowels
- If you develop a new headache after the procedure

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How can I reach a doctor from the Center? There is a doctor on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week who can be reached as follows:

- **DURING OFFICE HOURS (Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm), please call (617) 726-8810 and leave a message for the physician on the nurses' line**
- **AFTER HOURS AND ON WEEKENDS, please call (617-726-2000) and ask the hospital operator to page the physician on call for the MGH Pain Service**
- **IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO REACH A PHYSICIAN FROM OUR CENTER and you are having any of the problems listed above, please go to the nearest Emergency Room and show them this document**