



Discogram/Discography

What is a Discogram?

A Discogram is a diagnostic test in which small needles are placed into the discs in the spine and medicines are injected to determine the source of back or neck pain.

How does it help the pain?

The procedure itself does not reduce pain. The procedure is a test to determine the source of back or neck pain. By determining the source of pain, more specific treatments designed to reduce the pain can be offered at a later date.

Who can benefit from Discography?

Patients with degenerative or herniated discs who suffer from back or neck pain can make good candidates for discography. By determining which disc (if any) is painful more specific treatments can be offered at a future time to relieve pain. Patients having a Discogram have often failed conservative treatments including physical therapy, medications, or Epidural Steroid Injections.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be given medicine to make you feel sleepy. You will lie on your stomach and your back will be cleaned and draped with sterile dressings. The skin over the area is numbed and thin needles are inserted into several discs using x-ray guidance. A small amount of x-ray dye is injected into the disc and you will be asked to tell your doctor if this causes your pain to worsen.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be monitored in the office for 1 hour following the procedure. Rest is encouraged the day of the procedure and ice may be applied to the site of the injection. You may feel more discomfort over the next few days, however, your pain will generally return to baseline within 1-2 weeks. You will be seen two weeks after the procedure for a follow up visit.

What are the possible side effects?

As with any procedure, a small number of patients may experience side effects which will be explained in more detail by your doctor. A few potential side effects are listed below, however, the vast majority of patients

experience no side effects at all.

- Bleeding
- Infection in the disc
- Nerve damage
- Lack of relief
- Localized pain at site

What if I am taking blood thinning medications? (Eg., Coumadin, Plavix, Ticlid, Aggrenox):

Coumadin must be stopped 5 days before your procedure and you must have some laboratory studies taken immediately before your procedure (Eg., PT, INR). Your doctor may ask you to stop other medications before your procedure as well.

Does the procedure hurt?

Because the area is numbed with local anesthetic you should experience only modest discomfort. You will also be slightly sedated during the procedure.

Will I have any restrictions?

Driving is not permitted on the day of the procedure.