Myelogram

What is a Myelogram?
A myelogram is an x-ray procedure. X-ray contrast or “dye” is injected into the sac around the spinal cord and nerves. Pictures are taken of the spine with an x-ray machine and a CT scanner.

Why is it done?
A myelogram may be done to look for problems around the spinal cord that can cause pain, weakness, or numbness.

How is a Myelogram done?
The skin on your back or neck is cleaned and then numbed with a local pain medicine. The dye is placed into the sac around the spinal nerves using a small needle. This is sometimes called a “spinal tap”. Pictures are taken of the spine using an x-ray machine and a CT scanner.

What conditions might affect the procedure?
Please tell your doctor if you have any of the following:
- Allergy to x-ray contrast or “x-ray dye”
- Difficulty lying flat or breathing when lying flat
- A seizure disorder or epilepsy
- Any history of chest pain or kidney failure
- If you are on blood thinners
- If you are diabetic

What should I do before the procedure?
- Remember to arrange for someone to drive you home after the procedure.
- Do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours before your procedure. An empty stomach is best. “X-ray dye” may cause nausea if you have just eaten.

What will I be allowed to do after the procedure?
- You should not drive for 24 hours after the procedure.
- Take it easy for 1 day (no heavy lifting, exercise, or stair climbing). This helps the small puncture site heal and helps you avoid getting a headache.
- After 24 hours you may go back to regular activity.
- Follow all the instructions you are given.

Are there any side effects?
Most patients have no side effects. Some patients get a headache after the procedure. If you get a headache take Tylenol as directed, and lie down in bed. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Call the neuroradiologist or go to the emergency room if you have any numbness, pain, fever or severe headache.