

## RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### What is a CT Myelogram ?

A myelogram is an examination which provides detailed information about your spinal cord and nerve roots (the nerves which come off the spinal cord). Special x-ray dye (contrast) is injected into the fluid filled space around the spinal cord using x-rays to guide the needle tip in to the correct position in a Fluoroscopy Room. After an interval (usually 1 hour) you will then go to another room where a CT scan is then performed and the injected dye can be seen on the scan. A CT scanner is a type of x-ray machine that produces highly detailed cross-sectional images of the inside of the body.

**Note: The procedure cannot be performed if you are on blood thinning medication (anticoagulants).**

If you are taking any blood thinners (anticoagulants) such as warfarin, clopidogrel, dabigatran, apixaban, rivaroxaban) or any others, these medications must be stopped well before the procedure. Please make your **referring** doctor aware that you are taking a blood thinner as soon as possible. They will give you exact instructions about when to stop and restart the medication. These medications are commonly prescribed to prevent stroke or heart attack so it is very important that you do not stop taking them without being instructed to do so by your doctor. Aspirin is usually not stopped but check with your doctor.

### Women aged 12-55:

**As this procedure uses radiation, we must ensure that you are not pregnant. If you are a female aged between 12 and 55, your procedure should be carried out within the first 10 days after your period starts. If this appointment falls outside the first 10 days, please contact our office on 01603 286081 to re-arrange your appointment. However, if you have an IUCD (coil) fitted or have been on the contraceptive pill for three months you can ignore this advice.**

### What are the risks of the procedure?

The risks are very small but we have to mention them so that you have all the information to decide if this is the treatment that you want. The decision to have this diagnostic examination is entirely yours. To decline the procedure will not affect your care. It may mean, however, that your consultant cannot be as certain or specific about any future treatment or procedures.

- There is a small risk of bleeding, infection, nerve injury, or allergic reaction to the medications used.
- Some people experience a headache immediately after or within a day or so of the myelogram. This is usual and can be relieved by simple painkillers such

as paracetamol. Drinking plenty of fluids reduces the risk of headache and will also help to relieve it.

- Approximately 1 in 20 patients will experience nausea or vomiting.
- Both parts of this procedure use x-rays which can cause tumours to develop in the future. These doses are kept as low as possible and about the same as you experience in your normal day living in the UK over 4-5 years. The benefit of an accurate diagnosis far outweighs the risk.
- Problems that are rare but serious include:
  - Nerve root damage
  - Meningitis (infection of the lining around the brain and spinal cord)
  - Epidural abscess (collection of pus within the spine)
- Leak within the spine (leakage of the fluid around the spine can cause headaches)
  - Bleeding within the spine

The radiologist will assess you before you leave the department to ensure there are no concerns.

### **Will the injection be painful?**

Most people say the stinging/burning of the local anaesthetic at the start of the injection is the most uncomfortable part of the procedure however, each person's response to any procedure will differ. It is possible to get a temporary "electric-shock" sensation during the procedure, since the injection is close to the nerves.

### **What happens at the time of the myelogram ?**

The radiologist will first explain the procedure. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have and, remember that even at this stage, you can decide against going ahead with the procedure if you so wish.

The first part of the examination is performed in the Fluoroscopy room.

- You will be asked to lie on the X-ray table, generally on your left side.
- The X-ray machine will be positioned above you.
- A myelogram is performed under sterile conditions and the radiologist will wear sterile gloves to carry out the procedure.
- Your skin near the point of insertion on your lower back will be swabbed with antiseptic and then covered with a sterile drape.
- The skin and deeper tissues over the area will be numbed with local anaesthetic.
- A needle will be inserted and guided to the correct position to allow the special dye to be injected. If cerebrospinal fluid is required for analysis in the laboratory then a small amount can be taken at this point.
- Once the radiologist is satisfied with the images and position of the dye then the needle will be removed and you will be transferred onto a trolley or bed and taken to the Radiology Inpatient Waiting Bay for 1 hour.

- During this time you may be asked to intermittently turn in bed, as a result you will spend some time on your sides and front, if you are unable to do this then please let the radiologist know at the start of the procedure and adjustments will be made.

The second part of the examination occurs in the CT scanner room where more detailed mages will be obtained.

After this, you will then be returned to the ward and then discharged once you are well enough to go home.

### **Will I have any restrictions on the day of the procedure?**

It is important that you have an adult to escort you home. Therefore you must not drive or use public transport for the journey home. It is recommended that you rest for the rest of the day of the procedure.

### **How do I get the results?**

The radiologist will study your CT scan and report the findings to your consultant. Your consultant will then contact you or arrange a clinic appointment where you will get the results of the scan.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have any further questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please telephone the CT appointments office between 9am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday on 01603 286081.

### **Finally**

Some of your questions should have been answered by this letter, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you.

### **Access to Radiology**

<b>How to find us:</b>	<b>To access Radiology for your appointment, please follow sign to the Urgent Care Centre/Minors (Emergency Department) in front of Carpark G. On entering, turn immediately left and follow signs to the CT/MR Reception. Please note the change in location, which is likely to be different from your previous visits to Radiology.</b>  You can find more information at: <a href="http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk">www.nnuh.nhs.uk</a>
<b>Hospital transport:</b>	If you are eligible for hospital transport, please telephone 0333 240 4100
<b>Contact details:</b>	Telephone: 01603 286081 Monday to Friday 9am - 4.30pm Email: <a href="mailto:nnu-tr.ct@nhs.net">nnu-tr.ct@nhs.net</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/departments/radiology-nnuh">http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/departments/radiology-nnuh</a>

