

What is a Lumbar Puncture

A Lumbar Puncture is a procedure whereby an insertion of a needle into the subarachnoid space is performed to measure pressures within the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and to collect CSF for testing.

What Happens Before the Procedure

You need to **fast from solids and liquids for 4 hours** before the procedure.

If you take **Warfarin, Plavix, Iscover, Clopidogrel** or other blood thinning agents, notify the booking staff as this may require cessation or blood tests prior to the procedure.

A nurse will go through a checklist with you prior to the procedure. Questions relating to allergies, past medical history and your understanding of the procedure will be discussed.

Notify the nurse and doctor of any:

- Allergies, especially iodine as the contrast medium may cause a reaction.
- If you are or may be pregnant, due to the use of x-ray imaging.

Do not be alarmed if questions are repeated, this is to ensure a thorough check is undergone. A doctor will sign a consent form with you either in the pre admission clinic or on the day of the procedure. Please take this time to ask any questions regarding the procedure or concerns with the doctors. The doctor will discuss with you the details of the procedure and potential complications.

What Does a Lumbar Puncture Involve

For this procedure, you will be positioned on your stomach, and an antiseptic solution will be used to clean the area of your spine being examined. Local anaesthetic will then be injected at the site, whereby you may feel some stinging for a few minutes.

The spinal needle is inserted by the doctor, usually between the 3rd and 4th lumbar vertebrae and guided into position using x-ray imaging. Once the needle is in position the fluid is collected and pressures measured if requested. The procedure takes approximately half an hour.

After the sample is collected, the needle is then removed and a dressing is applied to the site.

What Happens After the Procedure

You will remain in hospital for a further 4 to 6 hours for observation and in this time will be required to lay flat on your back.

You are not able to drive yourself home so, please organise a driver to bring you to and from the procedure.

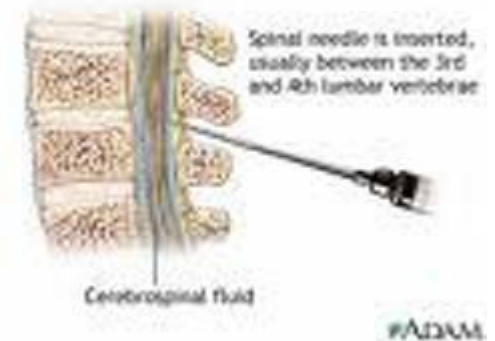
It is advisable to lay flat overnight, only sitting up to eat or go to the toilet. This minimises the chances of post procedure headache.

Risks

Complications are rare during this procedure. However you need to be informed of all the risks.

Risks associated with the procedure include:

- Pain or discomfort at the needle insertion site, bleeding at the site or into the spinal canal.
- Spinal infection (rare).
- Headache after the test.
- Any procedure potentially can be associated with unpredictable risks including death.



Seek Medical Advice if you have:

- Persistent headache.
- Prolonged nausea and vomiting.
- Weakness or loss of strength in your lower limbs.

Any Concerns contact:

- Your specialist or GP
- NIISwa:
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
(08) 9346 4455
Royal Perth Hospital
(08) 9224 1069
- Or the Emergency Department via switchboard on:
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
(08) 9346 3333
Royal Perth Hospital
(08) 9224 2244

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**NEUROLOGICAL INTERVENTION &
IMAGING SERVICES WA (NIISwa)**

PATIENT INFORMATION

LUMBAR PUNCTURE



NIISWA – Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
1st Floor G Block (access via Gold Lifts)
Phone (08) 9346 4455

NIISWA – Royal Perth Hospital
3rd Floor Imaging Services North Block
Phone (08) 9224 1069