

Perioperative Services
**Lumbar Puncture Instructions for
Patients/Caregivers**

What is a Lumbar Puncture?

- A lumbar puncture is also called a 'spinal tap' or 'LP'.
- A small, thin needle is used to collect cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) from your lower back.
- The fluid is sent to a laboratory to be examined.

What to Expect

- You will lie on your side or sit upright on a stretcher and be asked to tuck your knees into your chest or 'curl up like a ball'.
- Your back will be cleaned using antiseptic solution.
- You will have medication to numb or 'freeze' where the thin needle is inserted so you should not feel any pain but may be uncomfortable.
- The procedure will take 30-45 minutes.
- A small bandage is placed on your back after the procedure is done.

Before Procedure

- Please stop any medications that your physician advised you to.
- You may eat and drink as usual.

Day of Procedure

- Please arrive at the hospital and go to the **Day Surgery department** on the third floor 30 minutes before your procedure time. There is an information desk inside the east main entrance doors if you need help.
- Bring all of your medications with you (bottles, packages, blister packs).
- Bring your health card and any papers given to you by your physician or their office staff.

After the Procedure

- You will be asked to lie down and be monitored by a nurse for 30 minutes up to 1 hour after the procedure.
- You may have a headache or backache for 1-2 days after – you may take pain medication to help.
- The bandage can be removed the next day.
- You may return to work the next day unless your physician has provided different directions.
- You may drive yourself home after unless your physician has provided different directions.

***Call Your Physician or Go to the Emergency Department if:**

- You have a headache or backache that is not improving after 1-2 days.
- You notice any redness, swelling or itching on your back.
- You have a new fever.

If you have any questions about the procedure please contact your physician's office.

Disclaimer:

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