

LUMBAR PUNCTURE FACT SHEET

For: _____

What is it?

A Lumbar Puncture (Spinal Tap) Test is a procedure to remove a small sample of cerebral spinal fluid from the lower spine. A needle is inserted between the vertebrae (backbones) in the lower back and into the space containing the spinal fluid which surrounds and cushions the brain and spinal cord.

Where and when is it performed?

How long does it take?

About 20 to 30 minutes. There is an additional recovery period of about 30 minutes after the test, when you will remain at the clinic.

Why is the Lumbar Puncture test performed?

To obtain a specimen of fluid for testing. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) bathes the brain and contains proteins that can provide clues about disorders such as Alzheimer's disease or changes in the brain that accompany aging.

Does it hurt?

You may experience pressure when the needle touches some very brief leg pain while the needle is touching a floating nerve ending.

Lumbar Puncture
TOP VIEW

How is it performed?

- You will lie on your side with your knees far as possible **OR** you will sit on the edge forward position.
- The doctor will cleanse the skin over you
- An injection of local anesthetic may be given
- A needle is inserted into your spinal fluid
- Spinal fluid is collected into specimen tube for laboratory testing
- The needle is withdrawn, your back is cleaned and a band-aid is placed over the spot

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I'm unable to flex my back and legs?

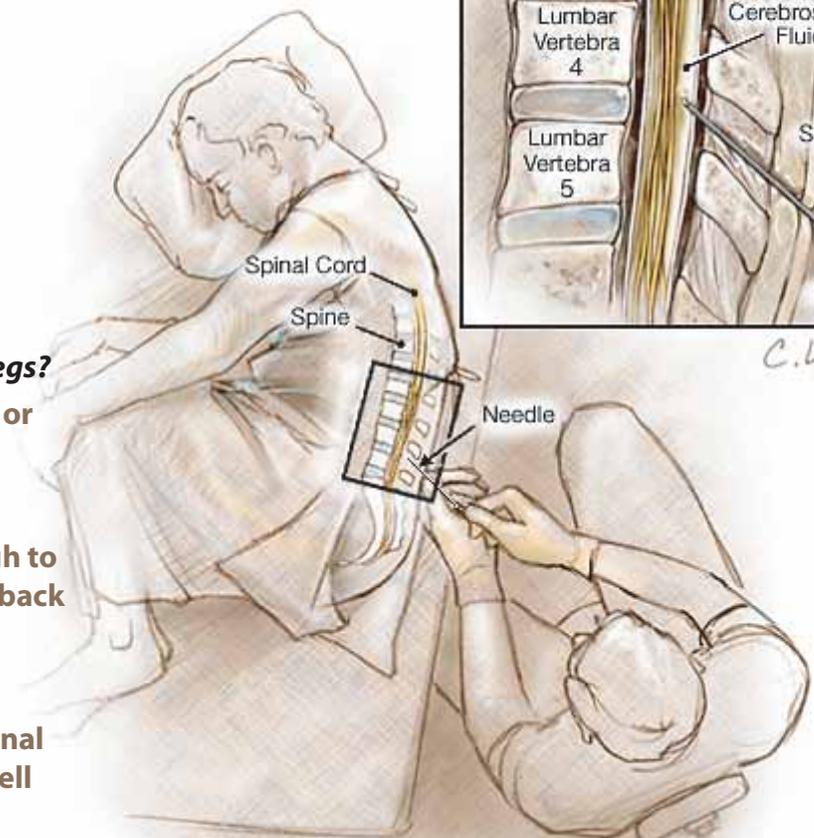
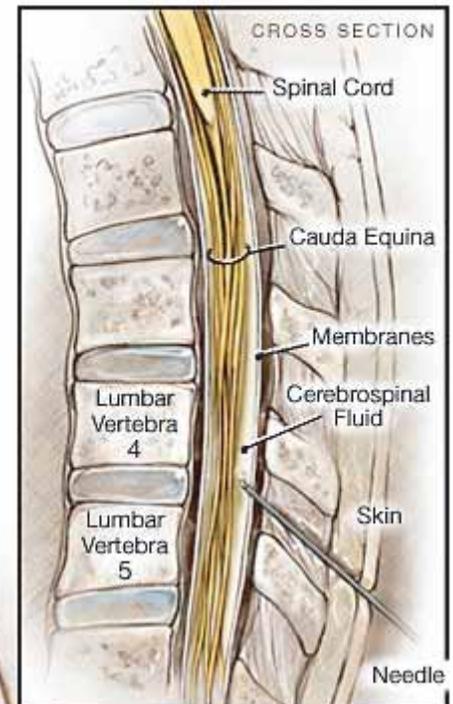
A: The test can be done without bending, or while sitting

Q: Is the entire needle put into my back?

A: No, but the needle must be long enough to pass through the muscles of the lower back

Q: Can I be paralyzed if the needle hits the spinal cord?

A: No, there is no need to worry about spinal cord damage. The needle is inserted well below the spinal cord



AFTER-THE-TEST INSTRUCTIONS & INSTRUCTIONS TO FOLLOW AT HOME ARE ON THE REVERSE OF THIS SHEET

LUMBAR PUNCTURE FACT SHEET (Cont'd)

After the test

- You will be asked to lie down for about 30 minutes.
- You will be given something to eat and drink.
- While you are recovering, please report any of the following symptoms to the doctor or nurse:
 - ***Headache***
 - ***Tingling***
 - ***Numbness or pain in your lower back and legs***
 - ***Problems with urination***
- You will return home after the recovery period.

Instructions to follow at home

- Drink at least 6 glasses of fluid (no alcohol) in the next 12 hours.
 - Remain quiet for the next 24 hours.
 - Avoid any strenuous physical activity for 48 hours - no exercising, heavy lifting, or repeated bending.
 - A mild headache may follow a lumbar puncture. It is often relieved by caffeine, aspirin or tylenol, and drinking plenty of fluids.
 - If you develop a headache that persists more than 24 hours, in particular one that is worse on sitting or standing, and better when lying down, then call the doctor or Study Coordinator at the clinic.
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