

Information About Your Child's Procedure

Lumbar Puncture

Read this form so you understand the procedure and its risks. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand.

What is a lumbar puncture?

During a lumbar puncture, the physician will insert a needle into the lower spine:

- to obtain cerebrospinal fluid (the fluid that circulates around the brain and spinal cord) to look for infection or cancer cells, or
- to administer a chemotherapy agent for cancer patients, or
- to monitor and relieve cerebrospinal fluid pressure for patients with pseudotumor

How is a lumbar puncture performed?

Your child will be placed on his or her side or stomach. We will inject local numbing medicine into the area around the spine. Using ultrasound or live X-ray (fluoroscopy) for guidance, the doctor will insert a needle into the spinal space. Once the needle is in the correct position, fluid will be removed and sent to the laboratory and/or medicine will be injected.

Will my child be awake for the procedure?

We will use either light sedation or a local numbing medicine depending on your child's age and medical history.

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Founded in 1855, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is the birthplace of pediatric medicine in America. Throughout its history, a passionate spirit of innovation has driven this renowned institution to pursue scientific discovery, establish the highest standards of patient care and train future leaders in pediatrics.

For a century and a half, Children's Hospital has served as a haven of hope for children and families worldwide.

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What are the risks of a lumbar puncture?

The procedure is considered low-risk. However, potential complications include:

- infection
- bleeding
- nerve damage
- headache

Will my child be in any pain after the procedure?

There might be mild bruising or tenderness in the lower back for a day or two.

What should I expect after the procedure is complete?

After the procedure is complete, your child will need to lie on his or her back in the recovery area for one hour to minimize the chance of having a headache. Then your child will be able to go home or return to his or her hospital room.

When can my child bathe?

We will place a Band-Aid® or clear bandage and gauze over the site. Keep the area dry for 24 hours. After 24 hours, you may remove the bandage and your child may shower or take a bath as usual.

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- headache lasting longer than 24 hours
- fever higher than 101° Fahrenheit
- drainage, such as pus, from the site
- overall weakness
- numbness of the legs

Call Interventional Radiology between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 215-590-7000. At the first prompt push 1, and at the second prompt push 2.

At all other times, call 215-590-1000 and ask to speak to the interventional radiologist on call.

The Interventional Radiology team is here to help you and your child. Please ask us if you have any questions or if anything is not clear.

Thank you!

