

DISCOGRAPHY

<i>What is it?</i>	A discogram is a diagnostic test performed to view and assess one or more intervertebral discs (soft cushion between vertebrae in the spine) to determine the source of a patient's pain. Dye is injected into the spinal disc(s) and an x-ray (or a "discogram") is taken to determine the condition of the disc. The discogram attempts to reproduce the pain you experience and confirm a break or tear in the disc(s). A normal disc will hold dye easily and there will be a steady increase in pressure when fluid is injected. An abnormal disc will leak dye and be unable to hold any type of pressure when being injected. The results of discography can be used to plan treatment options of your back pain.
<i>Why is it done?</i>	This procedure is performed on patients with pain in the low back or neck that is worsened when in one position, or the same position for a long period. Often times, an abnormal disc that is causing pain can not be seen using other types of diagnostic testing, such as an MRI or nerve conduction study.
<i>How is it done?</i>	Prior to the start of the procedure an intravenous (IV) catheter (tube) is placed in your vein. When you are in the procedure room, you will be asked to lie face down on a cushioned x-ray table. You will receive conscious sedation through your IV. Conscious sedation includes medication to help you relax, but it will not put you to sleep. A small needle is placed in the area of your neck or low back and then a second smaller needle is placed through the first needle. Normally, three to five vertebral levels are injected. After placement of the needle(s), a combination of antibiotic and dye is injected to determine the integrity of the disc. After the dye is injected, you will undergo a CT scan to determine the internal structure of the disc, and if there are tears.
<i>Is there any preparation?</i>	You will be receiving conscious sedation medication through your intravenous (IV) to help you relax. You MUST NOT EAT OR DRINK for 4 hours before your procedure. You may, however, take your medication with a small sip of water.
<i>What to wear?</i>	Please wear loose, comfortable clothing. Please leave all jewelry and other valuables at home.
<i>How long does it take?</i>	We ask that you arrive 30-45 minutes before the scheduled time of your procedure. The procedure lasts about 30 to 60 minutes, and you will be in the recovery area about 30 to 60 minutes. You will then go to the x-ray department for a CT scan of your spine.
<i>Risks</i>	<p>The risks associated with discography include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pain in the area where the needle(s) were inserted. The pain can last for two to three days, and can be treated by using ice and mild analgesics (pain medication) such as Motrin, Naprosyn or Tylenol. * An allergic reaction to the local anesthetic or dye. Most allergic reactions do not require further treatment. * Temporary numbness or weakness in your arms or legs, depending on the location of the injection: This is normal. You should have assistance with walking and should not drive for 24 hours after the procedure. * Discitis (inflammation in the disc) * Bleeding in the area of the injection * Infection in the area of the injection * Increased pain for a short time after this procedure. * Nerve damage, stroke, paralysis and even death.