

# About Your Lumbar Puncture

## *What You Need to Know and Do*

A lumbar puncture (spinal tap) helps diagnose problems in your brain and spinal cord.

### What medicines should I stop taking before my test?

Aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and naproxen are fine to take before your test.

Antiplatelet and anticoagulation medicines should be stopped for a period of time.

#### **14 days before the lumbar puncture, stop taking:**

- ticlopidine (Ticlid)

#### **7 days before, stop taking:**

- clopidogrel (Plavix)
- prasugrel (Effient)

#### **5 days before, stop taking:**

- ticagrelor (Brilinta)
- warfarin (Coumadin)
- acenocoumarol

#### **4 days before, stop taking:**

- fondaparinux (Arixtra)

#### **2 days (full 48 hours) before, stop taking:**

- apixiban (Eliquis)

#### **2 or more days before, stop taking:**

- dabigatran (Pradaxa)
- rivaroxaban (Xarelto)

The exact number of days before your procedure for these 2 drugs depends on your physical

condition and kidney function. Call (615) 322-0878 to ask how many days it should be.

#### **1 day (full 24 hours) before, stop taking:**

- heparin
- LMWH (Fragmin, Lovenox, Normiflo, Orgaran)

You can start retaking the above medicines 24 hours after your procedure.

### What happens during the test?

You will lie on your stomach. Your lower back will be wiped with a special cleanser. It will be injected with a numbing medicine.

The doctor will insert a sterile needle into the sac containing spinal fluid. We will use an anesthetic, but you may still feel some pain or pressure.

Some spinal fluid will be withdrawn through the needle. If you are getting chemo, it will be injected before the needle is removed.

### What should I do after my test?

- If you were sedated, someone must drive you home. Take it easy for the rest of the day.
- Don't do any strenuous activity for a day or two.
- Don't bend over for a day or two.
- If you get a headache, it often helps to lie flat.
- Drink lots of fluids. Water is best. But caffeinated drinks may help with a post-procedure headache.

*(continued)*

## What should I do if I have problems?

You should call your doctor right away if you have:

- a headache lasting 2 days or more
- fever that is 1°F above your normal temperature that lasts 24 to 48 hours
- pain in your back that doesn't go away
- numbness, weakness or tingling in your groin or legs.

## Who can I contact with questions?

For any problems, concerns, or questions, you may call the Radiology department at (615) 322-0878

After hours (between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays, and on weekends and holidays), call (615) 343-7185. Ask for the Radiology resident on call.

if you have an emergency, go to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1.