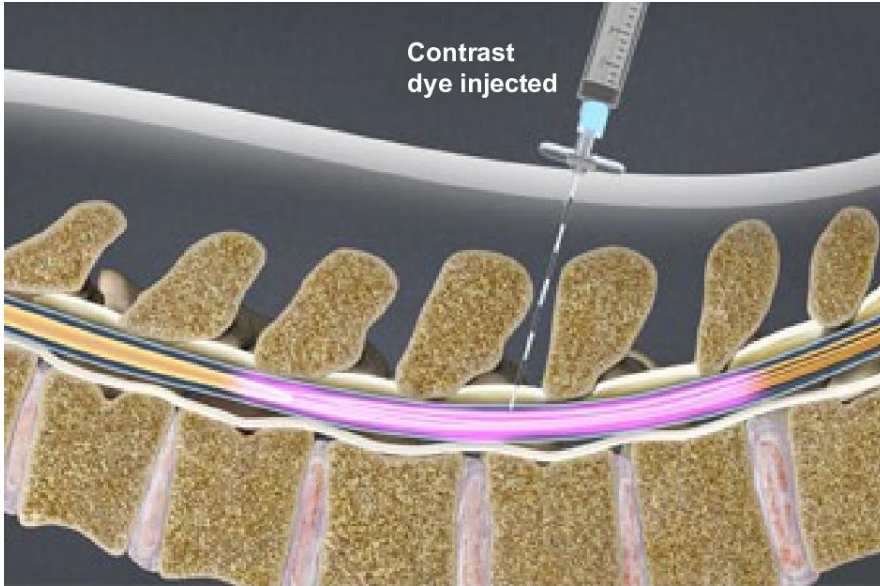




Myelography (Myelogram)



Overview

This outpatient procedure is a diagnostic examination of the spine. It allows the physician to identify problems involving the spine, the spinal cord and the nerve roots.

Preparation

In preparation for the procedure, the patient sits or lies down to expose the lower back. The back is cleaned with an antiseptic solution. The physician injects a local anesthetic to numb the tissue of the back.

Positioning the Needle

The physician carefully guides a needle down to the spinal column. The needle is pushed through the dura (the thin, tough sac that surrounds the spinal cord and the nerve roots).

Injecting the Dye

When the needle is positioned correctly, the physician slowly injects contrast dye. This dye mixes with the spinal fluid and flows through the spinal canal. The physician captures images of the spine from multiple angles with an x-ray or CT scanner. The dye greatly enhances the images. It helps show abnormalities in the spine.

End of Procedure

When the examination is complete, the injection site is covered with a small bandage. The dye will be harmlessly eliminated by the body. The patient will be monitored for a short time before being allowed to go home.