

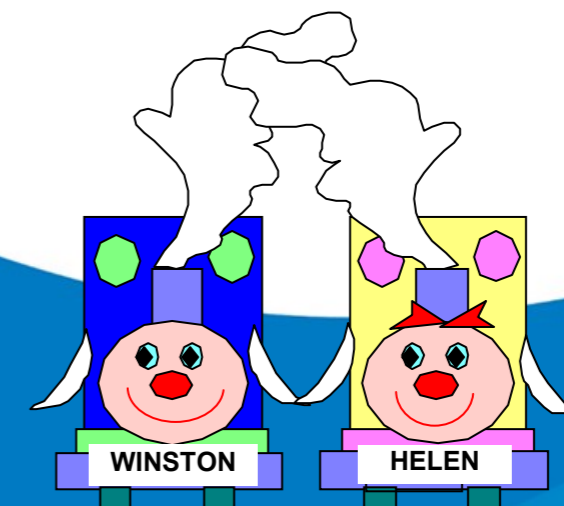
Lumbar Puncture Information for Parents/Carers

Paediatric Department

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.



If you have any further questions, please
contact your child's consultant via their
secretary through the hospital switchboard.

The secretaries are available Monday to Friday
9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

If you need to contact the department outside
of these hours, please phone:

Neonatal Unit
0151 430 1511

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

 /sthknhs  @sthk.nhs

www.sthk.nhs.uk

Author: Paediatric Department
Document Number: STHK1904
Version: 1
Review date: 01 / 12 / 2025

What is a lumbar puncture?

A lumbar puncture (LP) is a procedure that is performed to collect a small amount of fluid called cerebro-spinal fluid (CSF) that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

This is done to look for signs of infection such as meningitis.

Why does my baby need a lumbar puncture?

A lumbar puncture is done to help us exclude meningitis as a possible cause of infection; either because baby appears unwell or as part of a routine screen for sepsis.

Your baby will already be on antibiotics to treat any possible infection, but knowing if there is evidence of meningitis will help us decide how long baby needs antibiotics for as well as helping us to choose the right antibiotic.

How is it done?

It is like having a blood test, except that a needle is put into baby's back in between the bones of the spine to get the fluid. To do this, baby is held in a curled up position. Their skin is cleaned with antiseptic solution and the sample is taken with a needle using a sterile technique. The needle is then removed and a special sealing solution is applied to the area.



Are there any risks?

A lumbar puncture is a very safe procedure and complications are very rare.

In some cases, even with very experienced doctors, the procedure is not always successful. In these cases, your doctor will discuss with you what needs to happen next.

There is always a risk of infection with any procedure, but this risk is extremely low as a lumbar puncture is performed under sterile conditions.

Sometimes there may be some bleeding or discomfort at the site of the test.

The risk of nerve damage is extremely low when the procedure is performed correctly.

How long will the results take?

Usually, the preliminary results are available after a few hours. The final result takes 48 hours and baby will remain on antibiotics at least until the final result is available. The antibiotics may then carry on for a longer period if the results suggest meningitis.

If you have any questions, please do ask your midwife, nurse or doctor, we are happy to help.