

What are the side effects and risks?

This is a very safe procedure and serious side effects are uncommon.

Up to 1 in 3 patients may experience a headache after a Lumbar Puncture, caused by the removal of the CSF. Symptoms are eased by lying down, taking painkillers and drinking fluids.

As with any procedure, where a needle is used, swelling, bruising or bleeding at the site of entry. It is important that you tell the person who will perform the LP, if you have any bleeding disorder or if you are on any anticoagulants such as Warfarin, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Dabigatran or Edoxaban.

Backache, pain and numbness in the legs occurs rarely. This should settle in a few days, by taking simple painkillers. Nerve damage is an exceptionally rare risk.

Infection, this is extremely rare as the procedure is done under sterile conditions. If you develop a temperature, neck stiffness or confusion after a lumbar puncture you should attend the hospital as an emergency.

Reference(s): Chikusu, 2016. How to perform a Lumbar Puncture. South Sudan Medical Journal.

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



Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Lumbar Puncture

Information for patients

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

What is a Lumbar Puncture?

A lumbar puncture (LP) is a procedure which involves a thin needle being inserted between the bones of your lower spine to obtain a sample of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and to measure the pressure of CSF.

CSF is the fluid that bathes and protects the brain and spinal cord.

CSF replenished 2-3 times over in 24hrs therefore the small amount removed during an LP is rapidly replaced. It will be performed by a Doctor or Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP).

Why am I having a Lumbar Puncture?

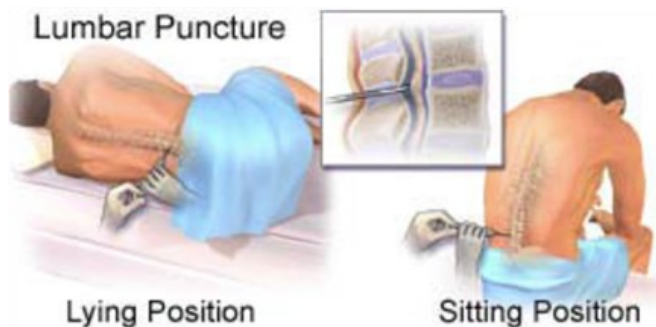
When CSF is analysed and pressure measured it can give us information about a range of conditions which may affect the brain and spinal cord (the central nervous system).

If you are unsure why the procedure is being done ask the person who intends to do it to explain the reasons to you.

You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the procedure.

How is the test performed?

You may be asked to lie on your side at the edge of the bed, with your knees curled up towards your stomach, or the procedure may be performed with you sitting up with your head resting on a table, supported by a pillow.



Chikusu, 2016

What will I feel?

The skin of the lower back is cleaned with an antiseptic which feels cold and wet.

To numb the area a local anaesthetic (you will be awake during the procedure) is injected under the skin, with a very fine needle, this may sting for a few seconds.

You may feel a sensation of pushing and/or pressure as the lumbar puncture needle is inserted.

What will I feel continued...

You may feel a brief tingling/pushing sensation when the needle is pushed forward, which can be slightly uncomfortable.

It is normal to feel this, often down one leg, and does not indicate that anything is wrong, but please tell the Doctor/ACP if you feel this.

This feeling should stop within a few seconds. It is important to try not to move, once the needle is correctly positioned.

The Doctor/ACP may need to measure the pressure of the CSF fluid and drain some of the fluid off if the pressure is too high. Samples will also be collected and sent to the laboratory for testing.

The procedure usually takes about 20 minutes. After the procedure it helps if you drink plenty of fluids, but you can mobilise around if you wish to.

A sterile dressing will be applied and you can remove this yourself after 24 hours.

It is not necessary to lie down after the procedure, although if you find your headache worsens on standing lying down may help with this.