

Care After a Lumbar Puncture (Spinal Tap) With Chemotherapy

General Information

Certain types of cancer may spread to your nervous system or to your brain. To prevent or treat this, your health care provider did a lumbar puncture (also called a spinal tap) to inject a chemotherapy medicine into your spinal fluid to destroy the cancer cells.

Activity

- You will lie down for 60 minutes or longer before you leave the hospital or clinic.
- You should have someone stay with you or be available to help you for 12 hours after the exam.
- Do not do any heavy activity or exercise for 24 hours after the procedure. Stay as quiet as possible, resting for the remainder of the day. Stay in bed with as little activity as possible.
- Do not lie flat in bed. Raise your head with two pillows. This will reduce your chance of getting a headache.
- You may get up to use the bathroom and sit up to eat.
- Do not go to work until tomorrow.
- Do not drive until tomorrow.
- After 24 hours, you may return to your normal activities as you are able. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

Your Health Care Provider

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Food and Beverages

- Return to your normal diet. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink up to four 8-ounce glasses of liquid in the 8 hours after the procedure, unless your health care provider gave you other directions.
- Do not drink alcohol for at least 24 hours after the procedure.

Medicine

- Return to your normal medicines (including pain medicine). Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

Site Care

- Bandages were placed over the injection site after the procedure.
- After 24 hours you may remove the bandages and take a shower.
- It is important to keep the injection site clean and dry.
- Do not swim or soak in a bathtub or hot tub for 24 hours.

(over)

Headache From the Lumbar Puncture

- The most common side effect of a lumbar puncture is a headache.
- If you get a headache and if the headache gets better when you lie flat, you will need to rest flat in bed for an extra 24 hours.
- Drink extra liquids, unless your health care provider gave you other instructions. This will reduce the chance you will get a headache.
- If the headache is severe or does not get better by lying flat and drinking extra liquids, you may have a spinal fluid leak. Call your health care provider or the facility where you had the procedure.

Side Effects From Chemotherapy Medicine

This is a partial list of the side effects you may have with this medicine. You may have some, all or none of those listed, or you may have other side effects not listed. Most side effects last only a short time.

Your side effects will depend on the type of chemotherapy medicine you were given. Talk with your health care provider for specific side effects you may have.

Possible side effects include:

- nausea (during the first 24 to 48 hours)
- mouth sores (1 to 2 weeks after therapy starts)
- lowered blood counts (1 to 2 weeks after therapy starts).

For complete medicine information or for questions about your medicine, please ask your health care provider or pharmacist.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- nausea with vomiting
- severe headache
- feeling very sleepy or confused
- pain, swelling, redness or drainage at the puncture site
- chills or a temperature of 101 F or higher
- any questions or concerns.