

Lumbar Puncture (Spinal Tap)

General Information

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after the procedure.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Procedure

During a lumbar puncture, your doctor inserts a needle into your spine in your lower back to collect and test a sample of spinal fluid.

Before the Procedure

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.

Activity

- Stay in bed with your head raised 20 to 30 degrees (two pillows) for the rest of the day. You may get up and go to the bathroom.
- Slowly return to your regular level of activity. Doing too much too soon will increase your risk of a headache.
- Rest as needed.
- Follow your health care provider's directions.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Follow your health care provider's directions to prevent constipation.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

(over)

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have a temperature higher than 101 F
- have a severe headache that doesn't go away after taking pain medicine or resting
- feel dizzy or lightheaded that won't stop
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.