

LUMBAR DISCOGRAPHY

for diagnosing disc pain

What is a lumbar discography ?

Lumbar Discography is a procedure for diagnosing painful tears in inter-vertebral discs in the lower back.

What are intervertebral discs?

Intervertebral discs are found between the vertebrae of the spine. These soft discs located in the neck, upper back , and lower back, cushion the vertebrae, hold them together, and control motion. Each disc has two parts - the inner part is called the nucleus and the outer part is called the anulus which has nerve endings that are sensitive to pain.

What causes pain in the disc?

If a disc tears, chemicals inside the nucleus may leak out which can inflame the nerves in the anulus and cause pain. Nerve roots and the protective covering of the spinal cord are also sensitive to these chemicals, which in the low back can cause low back and/or leg pain.

An untreated disc tear may cause a disc to bulge or herniate, further inflaming or compressing the nerve roots and cause even more pain. Early diagnosis of tears is very important.

How do I know if I have disc pain?

If you have pain in your lower back or legs and it has not improved with treatment, you may have disc pain.

Common tests such as MRIs can show disc bulges and nerve root compression, but may not always show tears or leaks in discs. Discography is the best way to diagnose torn discs.

Discography can also provide important information to determine if you will benefit from spine surgery.

What is a discography?

Discography is a procedure that helps your doctor find disc tears that may be causing your pain.

During discography, a thin needle is inserted into the center of a disc. An x-ray contrast dye will be injected into the disc to identify whether or not the disc is painful. The dye will outline the tears in the disc. This is often done to several discs to find the specific disc or discs that are causing the pain.

What happens during discography?

Discography may start with an IV sedation and local anesthetic will be used to numb your skin.

A thin needle will be inserted directly into a disc. Fluoroscopy, a type of x-ray, must be used to ensure the safe and proper position of the needle. A dye will be injected to outline the tear.

It is important to describe any pain you feel to your doctor. During discography, a healthy disc will not cause your usual pain but a torn disc may. If you feel a different pain or soreness, be sure to explain that it hurts but is not your usual pain. This will help the doctor determine which discs may be responsible for your pain.



www.jerseyrehab.com

15 Newark Avenue, Belleville, NJ 07109



facebook.com/jerseyrehab

LUMBAR DISCOGRAPHY

for diagnosing disc pain

What happens after discography?

You will be monitored for up to 30 minutes after the procedure. When you are ready to leave, the staff will give you discharge instructions. You will be sent for a CT scan to get an image of your discs.

You may feel increased pain in your back after discography. This indicates your doctor may have found the source of your pain.

You can usually return to work a day or two after discography, but always check with your doctor.

What happens next?

You will have a follow up appointment with your doctor to discuss the results of the discography. Your doctor will then recommend the best treatment for you based on the results.

This information is for general education only. Specific questions or concerns should always be discussed with your doctor.



www.jerseyrehab.com

15 Newark Avenue, Belleville, NJ 07109



facebook.com/jerseyrehab