

LUMBAR DISCOGRAPHY

WHAT IS PROVOCATIVE DISCOGRAPHY?

A Lumbar Discogram is a picture of your lumbar discs. The lumbar discs are shock absorbers between the vertebral bones in the lower spine. Medicine that can be seen on x-ray (contrast) is put into the lumbar disc under pressure (provocation) to determine whether or not one or more of the lumbar discs is the cause of symptoms such as back pain, leg pain, buttock and hip pain or numbness and tingling in the legs and feet.

HOW IS IT DONE?

Small needles are placed through sterilized skin, and passed by nerves into the approximate center of each disc to be studied. Although not common, there are potential risks with this process.

An iodine based liquid "dye or contrast" is injected under pressure into the appropriate discs. A healthy disc normally will not hurt. The "dye" shows where the breaks are in the discs. The pressure of the dye injection is recorded and fluoroscopy is used to observe the "dye". A "CT" (computerized tomography) x-ray after the injection provides a three dimensional picture of the disc with the "dye".

TIME?

LUMBAR DISCOGRAPHY takes about 45 minutes to complete. Pain medicine and sedation help patients tolerate the pain from a provoked broken disc. Patients must be aware enough to be able to evaluate and describe any pain produced by the discogram.

RISKS

There are minimal risks associated with this procedure.