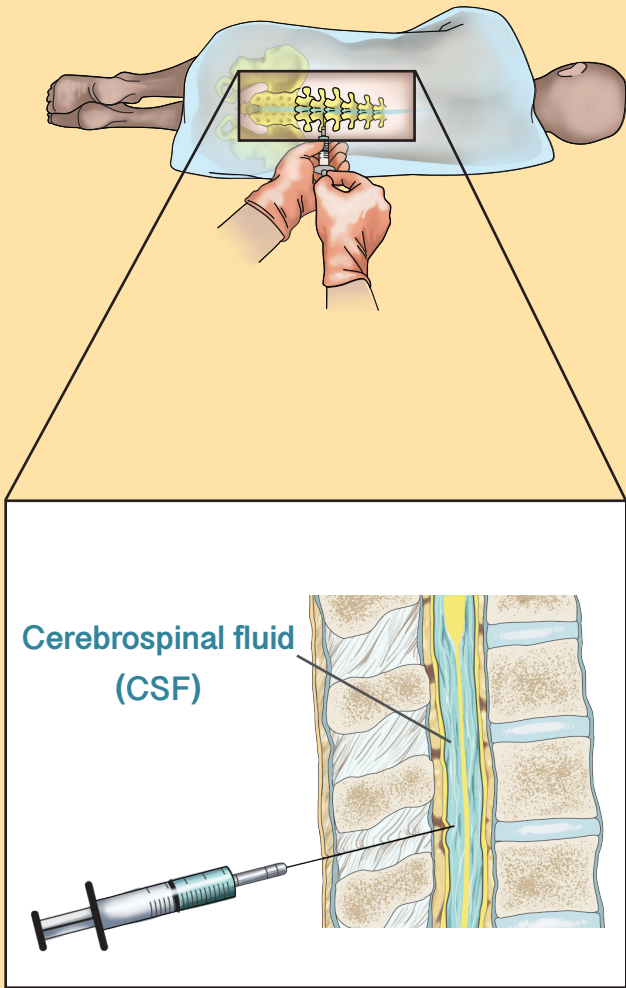


Lumbar Puncture Guide

A lumbar puncture (LP) is an outpatient procedure to collect the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). CSF is the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

What will happen during an LP?



During the LP procedure, you may either be lying on your side or sitting upright. These positions help flex your back to make it easier for the doctor to insert the needle.

The area on your lower back will be cleaned and numbed with a numbing medicine (local anesthetic). The numbing medicine is applied with a small needle and you will feel a brief pinch or sting.

Once the area is numb, your doctor will insert a thin needle in your lower back to collect a small amount of fluid. Your doctor will guide you to help you stay as relaxed as possible and to breathe normally. You may feel increased pressure in your lower back as the fluid is collected. After the fluid is collected, the area is cleaned again and covered with bandage.



How much fluid is collected?

Around 1 tablespoon of CSF.



How long will it take?

The LP will take about 30 minutes, but plan for the entire visit to your doctor's office to take around 2 hours.



How do I prepare for an LP?

Plan to have a friend or family member accompany you to and from the doctor's office. Generally, little to no preparation is needed; however, your doctor may give you specific instructions to follow before the procedure.



What are the risks associated with an LP?

~5%

of people get a headache

~15%

of people have back pain

The procedure is safe, but side effects can occur. The most common side effects, noted above, usually last 1 to 2 days and go away on their own. Other possible complications are very rare, such as infection and bleeding. Talk to your doctor regarding any concerns you might have.

What happens after the procedure?

Immediately after the LP, your doctor may recommend lying down for about 30 minutes. In the 24 hours after the LP, you will be advised not do any strenuous activities (e.g., heavy lifting or jogging), but usual activities like walking and light housework are fine. Stay hydrated by drinking your usual amount of fluids (e.g., 6-8 glasses of water a day). If you have pain after the procedure, your doctor may suggest an over the counter pain medication.

