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Discography

WHAT IS DISCOGRAPHY? Discography is a diagnostic procedure in which x-ray dye (x-ray contrast) is injected into the discs of the spine. After the x-ray dye is injected, a x-ray (called a "discogram") is taken of the discs. The discogram may be normal or may show tears (fissures) in the lining of the disc. The results of discography are used to plan surgery or IDET (intradiscal electrothermal) treatment.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DISCOGRAPHY?

Discography is done to answer the questions "Is my back pain or neck pain from a degenerated disc?" and "Which discs –if any- are causing my pain?"

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PAIN IS FROM A

DAMAGED DISC? With age or from an injury, the wall of the spinal discs can get cracks or tears (fissures). This condition is call Internal Disc Disruption or Degenerative Disc Disease. Also, the wall of the disc can weaken and bulge out (a herniated disc). When the disc causes pain, the pain is usually felt as a deep, aching pain in the back and sometimes in the buttocks and into the thigh. However, pain from facet joints in the back and from the sacroiliac joints (SI joints) can be in the same location and feel the same. The best way to tell if the pain is from a damaged disc is with discography.

HOW IS DISCOGRAPHY PERFORMED? The procedure is done in the Operating Room with fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance. For lumbar discography (discs in the low back), it is done with you lying on your stomach. For cervical discography (discs in the neck), it is usually done with you lying on your back.

There will be an anesthesiologist present during the procedure to monitor you and administer intravenous sedation to help you be comfortable and relaxed. You are watched closely with a blood pressure cuff and blood oxygen-monitoring device.

WHAT WILL I FEEL DURING THE INJECTION?

When a normal disc is injected, you will feel a sense of pressure, but not pain. When an abnormal disc is injected, you will feel pain. It is important to try to tell if the pain you are feeling is your usual pain or different. With each disc injected (suspected and one normal disc), you will be asked if it is painful, where you feel the pain and whether it is in the same area as your usual pain.

HOW LONG DOES DISCOGRAPHY TAKE?

Discography takes about 30 to 45 minutes, depending on how many levels are injected.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY INJECTED?

The injection consists of x-ray dye (x-ray contrast). It is usually mixed with some antibiotics to prevent infection.

WILL THE INJECTIONS HURT?

The procedure involves inserting a needle through skin and deeper tissues (like a "tetanus shot"), so there is some discomfort involved. However, your doctor will numb the skin and deeper tissues with a local anesthetic using a very thin needle prior to inserting the needle into the disc. Most of the patients also receive intravenous sedation and analgesia, which makes the procedure easy to tolerate. You may have a flare-up of your back pain after the injection, but this gets better in a day or two and can usually be managed with ice packs and oral pain medication.

WILL I BE "PUT OUT" FOR THIS PROCEDURE?

No. This procedure is done under local anesthesia. Injection of a medicine like Novocaine-Lidocaine is performed to numb the skin. Most of the patients also receive intravenous sedation and analgesia, to help them relax and make the procedure easier to tolerate. The amount of sedation given depends upon the patient. You can be sleepy while the needles are placed, but during the discogram injections, you will to be awake enough to tell the doctor what you are feeling.

WILL MY PAIN BE BETTER AFTER THE

INJECTION? No. Discography does not treat your condition. It is a diagnostic test that allows your doctors to plan your therapy.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

You will need a ride home. We advise the patients to take it easy for a day or so after the procedure. You may need to

apply ice to the affected area for 20-30 minutes at a time for the next day. Perform the activities as tolerated by you.

CAN I GO TO WORK TO WORK THE NEXT DAY?

We usually recommend taking 2-3 days off work after the injection.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS OF DISCOGRAPHY?

Generally speaking, this procedure is safe. However, with any procedure there are risks, side effects, and possibility of complications. The most common side effect is pain -, which is temporary. Sometimes, the discogram needle brushes past a nerve root and the nerve root is irritated. This pain almost always gets better quickly. The other rare risks involve infection, bleeding, nerve damage and worsening of symptoms. Fortunately, the serious side effects and complications are uncommon.

WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE THIS PROCEDURE?

If you are allergic to any of the medications or contrast to be injected or if you have an active infection, if you are pregnant, have bleeding disorders you should not have the procedure. You should not have discography unless you have failed all other lesser invasive pain management options. Discuss with your doctor.

CERTAIN MEDICATIONS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF COMPLICATIONS.

* If you are on blood thinners such as Coumadin (warfarin), heparin, Aggrenox, Lovenox (enoxoparin), Ticlid (ticlopidine), Plavix (clopidogrel), Aspirin or Aspirin like products * you will need to get a medical clearance allowing you to stop your medication from your physician, prior to your scheduled procedure. **DO NOT STOP TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS UNTIL WE CALL AND NOTIFY YOU THAT YOU HAVE A MEDICAL CLEARANCE.** You can continue to use Celebrex and your pain medicines before the procedure. You should continue to **TAKE YOUR ROUTINE MEDICATIONS** (high blood pressure and diabetes medications) before the procedure. If you are on antibiotics please notify us, he may wait to do the procedure.

*** List of Asprin like products:**

Asprin, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Naprosyn, Naproxen, Voltaren, Relafen, Clininol Cataflam, Feldene, Lodine, Mobic, Arthrotec, Vicoprofen and similar

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products. You can resume taking these the next day after the procedure.

REMEMBER :

- Please **DO NOT** stop taking your blood pressure, diabetic, insulin, or cardiac medicines.
- Have adult drive or take personalized taxi service to return to your home.
- Wear loose, comfortable two piece clothing.
- If you are diabetic, steroids may temporarily affect your blood sugar, please contact your physician.
- Stop taking Asprin or like products 7 days prior to the scheduled procedure.
- Bring any requested MRI, CT, X-ray images on the day of the procedure.
- If you are pregnant or possibility that you may be pregnant, let the physician know immediately, as the X-ray camera cannot be used.
- When you check in you will need to sign consent forms, advise the medical staff of any allergies, especially to shellfish, iodine or contrast dyes.
- IV sedation; No **FOOD** for 8 HOURS before the procedure. Clear fluids (Water, Apple Juice) are OK 4 hours before the procedure. If you are Diabetic please omit morning dose of diabetic control medicine the day of the appointment. If you have taken your diabetic medicine, please make sure you drink Apple Juice 4 hours before your procedure to avoid low sugar related problems

**ALL PROCEDURES DONE AT THIS LOCATION:
New York Spine & Sport Rehabilitation Medicine/New
York Advanced Surgical Intervention Care**

2008 Eastchester Road 2nd level, Bronx, NY 10461

Office: 718-794-0600

Fax: 718-794-9899

SIREEN GOPAL, M.D.

Clinical Assistant Professor

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Board Certified in:

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R),

Pain Management (PM&R/ Anesthesiology),

Pain Medicine & Electrodagnostic Medicine

www.nyspineandsport.com