

## MERCER COUNTY SURGERY CENTER

### DISCOGRAM

#### WHAT IS A DISCOGRAM?

A discogram is a diagnostic test performed to view and assess the internal structure of a disc and determine if it is a source of pain.

#### HOW IS THE PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

The patient is given intravenous medication as a relaxant and pain reliever. A local anesthetic is injected into the patient's skin in the area that is being examined. A needle is inserted through a previously placed needle in the skin and into the disc or discs if more than one disc is being examined. A CT scan is usually performed on the painful disc after the dye is injected to obtain images of the dye distribution. This will demonstrate annular tears, scarring, disc bulges and changes in the nucleus of the disc.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

A discogram reveals the exact source of your disc pain by awakening the pain symptom in that disc. When a healthy disc is injected, you will feel little or no pain. If the disc is not healthy, your pain may intensify.

- Re-creation of painful symptoms if the disc/discs are abnormal.
- Confirmation of a diagnosis and/or determination of which disc/discs is the source of pain.

#### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Thirty minutes, plus an additional thirty minutes if a CT is indicated, plus recovery time. Total procedure should be approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

#### ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Possible side effects of the steroid medications include facial flushing, insomnia and occasional low grade fever. These side effects are bothersome in only about 5% of patients and commonly disappear within 1-3 days after the procedure.

Most of the procedures done at the center are done with IV conscious sedation. This is so you will be more comfortable and unafraid. Because of the sedation, you must not eat or drink anything after midnight and you must have a ride home. You may take all of your regular morning medications on the day of procedure with a small sip of water. You should especially take any heart or high blood pressure medications. Diabetics should not take their diabetic medications (pills or insulin), but should bring the medicine with them so they may take it once the procedure is completed. Because of the nature of our patient

schedule, you can expect to spend several hours with us. You may feel free to bring a lunch with you. Juice and crackers will be provided.

**PLEASE DO NOT BRING VALUABLES WITH YOU.**

Your belongings will be kept with you at all times but the center is not responsible for any valuables you bring with you.

On the day of your procedure, you will sign in with the receptionist at the front desk. She will inform the nursing staff that you are here. When it is time for your procedure, you will be placed in the pre-operative holding area. Before or at the time of the procedure, an IV will be started which allows us to sedate you and protect against any allergic reactions.

The procedure starts in one of our outpatient surgi-rooms. These rooms are fully equipped with monitoring and anesthesia equipment. You will be lying face down on the procedure table. A radiographic piece of equipment, called a C-arm, will be used to allow the practitioner to visualize the exact area he/she will be injecting. After the injections, you will be transferred to the recovery room area so your blood pressure and breathing can be monitored while you awake from the sedation.

After the procedure, you will be allowed to eat and drink. Because you have had sedation during the procedure, you must have a ride home. You should go directly home and plan to take it easy for the rest of the day.

If you have any questions regarding your procedure, please do not hesitate to call us at 215-949-3100. If it is after normal working hours, please contact your treating physician.