

Lumbar Puncture

How to take care of the skin site

Your child had a lumbar puncture (LP) or spinal tap. This is when a needle is placed in the spine to remove fluid.

How do I prevent infection?

- Keep the Band-Aid or dressing clean and dry.
- Leave the dressing in place until bedtime or the next morning.
- Remove the dressing the next morning.
- Do not leave it on for more than 24 hours. A dirty dressing could increase the chance for infection.

To Learn More

- Hematology/Oncology
206-987-2106
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA)
206-288-7600
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Will my child have any pain?

Your child was given pain medicine and a numbing anesthesia shot during the LP. This will still be in effect once they wake up. Most children do not need strong pain medicine after a LP unless it was hard to get the needle into the spine. We will tell you if we had a hard time and if you should expect your child to be uncomfortable. Let your provider know if your child seems uncomfortable or complains of pain at home.

How do I manage side effects?

It is rare to have side effects after a lumbar puncture. One of the more common side effects is a "spinal headache." Call the clinic if your child complains of a severe headache.

You can help prevent a headache by:

- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Lying flat for 30 minutes after the LP
- Using a different kind of needle with future lumbar punctures. Let your health care team know for next time.

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers
206-987-2280 (TTY)

When should I call the clinic?

If you notice any of these warning signs:

- Swelling or redness around the skin site
- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 Celsius)
- Blood or clear fluid draining from the skin site

Call _____ the Hematology-Oncology Clinic at 206-987-2106

_____ the SCCA Clinic at 206-288-7600

For information or concerns about your child, call your child's clinic provider.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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