

What is a Cervical/Lumbar Discography?

Discography is a diagnostic procedure that confirms or denies the disc(s) as a source of pain. MRI and CT scans can only demonstrate anatomy, not pinpoint the source of pain. Hence a discography is performed to locate any discogenic (meaning: from the disc) sources of pain.

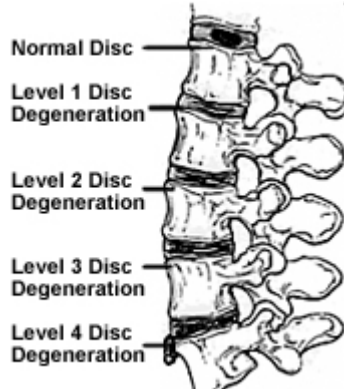


Figure showing the five stages of contrast spread within a lumbar disc space. The top disc shows a normal discogram. Degeneration is shown progressively down the figure with the greatest extent of injury and degeneration evident in the lowest disc space.

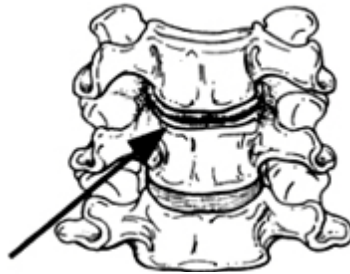


Figure showing the spread of contrast in a normal disc.

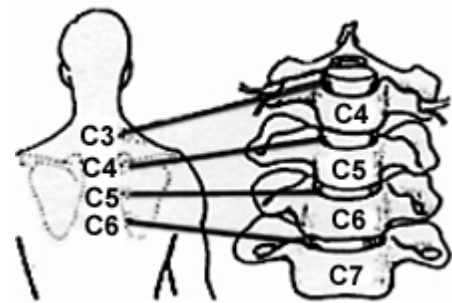


Figure showing some of the various disc levels in the cervical spine.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is discography helpful?

In many cases, discs may be abnormal on MRI or CT scans but they may not be a source of pain. Discography is the only way to identify painful disc(s) helping the surgeon plan the correct treatment.

What can I anticipate during the procedure?

An IV will be started so that relaxation and pain medicine can be given. You will lie on your back or stomach and your skin will be cleansed. Next, the doctor will numb a small area of skin with a local anesthetic which may sting for a few seconds. The doctor will then use x-ray guidance to direct a very small needle into your disc. This will be repeated at a few other disc levels. After the needles are in their proper locations, a small amount of contrast dye mixed with antibiotic is injected into each disc. If a disc is the source of your usual pain, the injection will temporarily reproduce your symptoms. If a disc is not the source of your pain, the injection will not cause any discomfort.

Will this procedure be painful?

You will be consciously sedated with IV medication for the procedure. This will help to relax you and ease the pain. You need to be able to communicate with the doctor what you are feeling during the procedure.

What You Need to Know Before Your Appointment

Pre-Procedure Instructions:

- Please bring all X-rays, MRI films, etc. with you for your initial visit.
- **DO NOT** eat any solid food for at least 6 hours and **DO NOT** drink any liquid for at least 4 hours prior to your appointment.
- If you have sedation during the procedure, you will need someone to come with you and to drive you home. You will not be able to drive for 24 hours following the procedure.
- Please wear clean, loose fitting clothing such as sweats. You will be wearing these clothes during the procedure. Belt buckles and buttons could interfere with the X-rays.
- Please drink plenty of WATER the day before your procedure.
- **Diabetics**
DO NOT take your insulin or oral anti-diabetic agents on the day of the procedure. You may eat and take your diabetic medications **AFTER** the procedure.
- Please note the **Medication Guidelines** covered below.

Medication Guidelines:

Please **STOP** taking the following medications (if applicable) **seven (7) days before** your procedure:

- Arthrotec • Toradol • Ibuprofen • Anaprox • Relafen • Advil • Naproxen • Feldene
- Voltaren • Indocin • Percodan • Motrin • All pain or arthritis herbals (ginko biloba, feverfen, ginger)

Please stop taking all Aspirin products **seven (7) days before** your procedure including:

- Baby aspirin • Bufferin • Excedrin • Anacin • Ascriptin • Ecotrin • Empirin • Midol • Pepto-Bismol
- Sine-Off • Sine-Aid IB • Nuprin • Dristan Sinus • Orgaran • Persantine • Aggrenox

Please call our office **IMMEDIATELY** at 253-627-2666, if you are taking any of the following medications:

- **Levenox • Coumadin • Plavix • Ticlid.**

•You may have small sips of water to take your routine medications that are not mentioned in the Medications Guidelines above.

Please call Cascade Interventional Pain Center at 253-627-2666 with further questions.