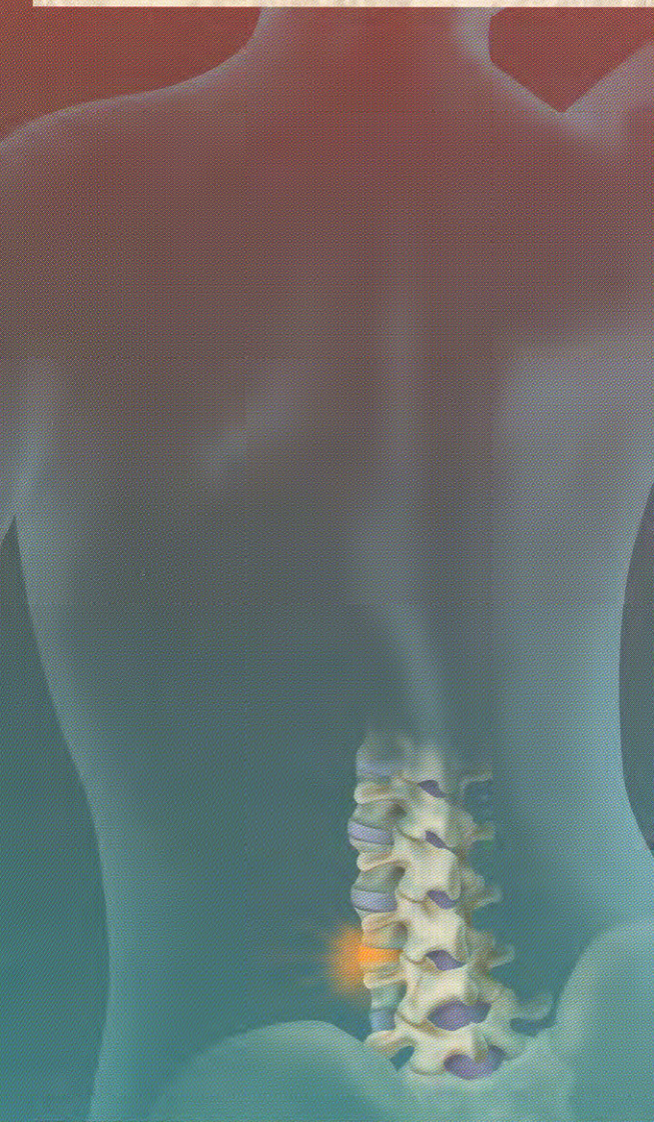


# DISCOGRAM

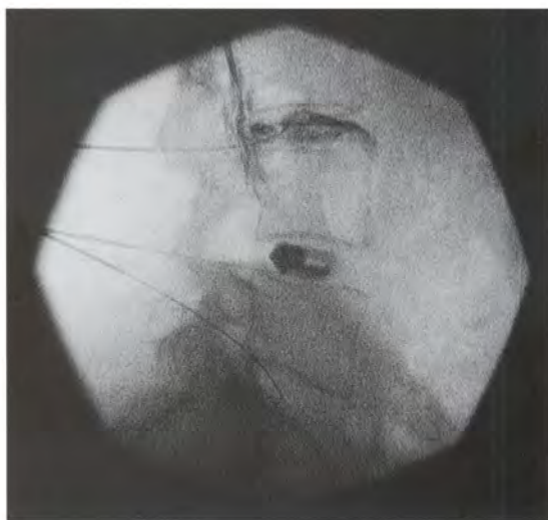
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Finding the Source  
of Your Pain

# WHAT IS A DISCOGRAM?

A discogram is a test in which contrast fluid is injected into a disc in your spine. The test helps pinpoint which disc is causing your back or leg pain. It is often done when certain treatments for your pain are being considered. As part of the test, an image of the disc is taken. This image shows where and how the disc is damaged.



A discogram image.

## RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

A discogram may be painful. But it can give your doctor vital information to help plan your treatment. The test also has risks. These include:

- Bleeding
- Spinal fluid leak
- Infection
- Nerve damage

## BEFORE YOUR TEST

Prepare for your test as instructed. Allow plenty of time before your appointment to check in. You will need to sign a form stating that the test has been explained to you. If you have questions, be sure to ask them before you sign the form. Your visit will last 2 to 4 hours.



### LET THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER KNOW

For your safety and the success of your test, tell the health care provider if you:

- Are pregnant or think you may be.
- Have any bleeding problems.
- Take blood thinners (anticoagulants) or other medications, including aspirin, herbs, or supplements.
- Have any allergies.

You will also be asked questions about your overall health.

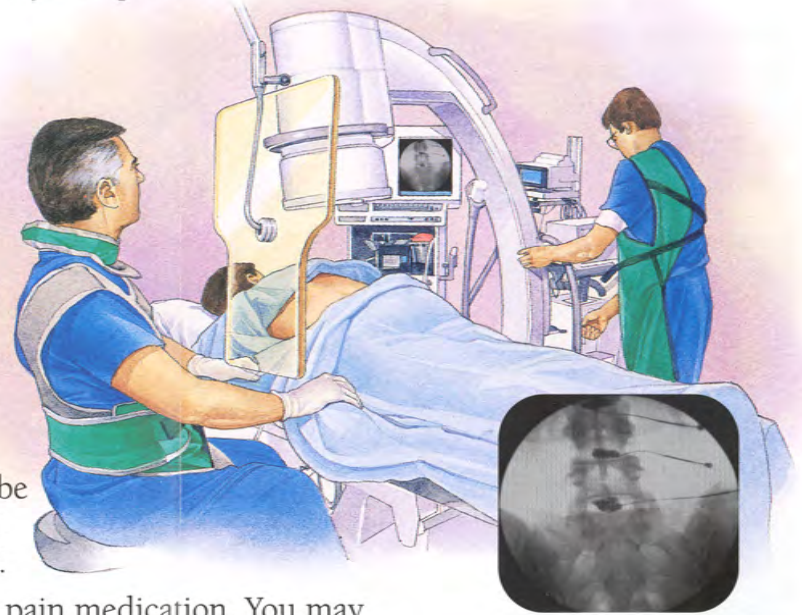
## DURING YOUR TEST

You are asked to lie on your stomach on an exam table. You may be given medication to help you relax. The doctor cleans your low back and covers the area with sterile drapes. The region is numbed with medication. A needle is placed into each disc being tested. Then a contrast solution is injected into one of the discs in your spine.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- If there is damage to the disc, you will feel pain when the fluid is injected. The doctor will ask whether this pain is in the same place as the pain that you usually feel.
- The pain may be worse than your usual pain. Make sure to tell your doctor how you feel.
- A picture of the disc is taken.
- At least two of your discs will be tested. This is so the results of the two tests can be compared.

After the test, you may be given pain medication. You may also have a **CT** (computed tomography) scan. This imaging test gives more information about the disc.



A discogram image shows damage to the disc.

## AFTER YOUR TEST

Have an adult friend or family member drive you home after your test. Take it easy for the rest of the day, as advised. Drink plenty of water to help flush the contrast fluid from your body. Lie down with your head flat if you get a headache. You may be in more pain than usual for up to 5 days after the discogram. Your doctor may recommend medication to help ease the pain. If the increased pain lasts longer than 5 days, tell your doctor.



### CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:

- Worsening pain in your back or legs.
- Fever over 100°F.
- Numbness, tingling, or weakness in your legs.
- A headache that lasts for 2 days or more.