Information on procedure:  

**Myelogram**

**WHAT IS A MYELOGRAM?** A Myelogram is imaging of the area surrounding the spinal cord, called the spinal canal. X-ray and / or CT images are taken after injecting a contrast medium (x-ray dye) into the spinal canal to demonstrate distortions or abnormalities of the spinal cord and nerve roots. This is an alternative to an MRI scan and so can also be a useful tool to demonstrate the canal dimensions in patients who have a lot of metalwork on their spine.

*Please call us immediately if you are taking any antibiotics* on 020 8909 5460.

**FEMALES AGED 12-60 YEARS:** If your scan is of the pelvic area, your appointment has to be within 10 days of your period starting. If this appointment does not fall within the required time frame, please contact us.

**PREPARATION:** You will be admitted to a hospital ward before the procedure. When you go to the Imaging department, the radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form.

**HAVING THE SCAN:** You will be asked to lie on your front or side. The radiologist will clean the area, may give a local anaesthetic and will then use the x-rays to direct the needle into the correct position. When the needle is positioned, the radiologist will inject the contrast.

*It is very important that you lie perfectly still during the injection.* Then either the table will be tipped or you will be asked to roll one way then another, so that the contrast moves all around the area that is being examined. Some images will then be taken. If you have the procedure in the x-ray department, you will usually also be transferred on a trolley to the CT scanner for additional imaging there.

**AFTERCARE:** After the CT you will be returned to the ward. You must remain on strict bed rest for 4-8 hours post injection and try to drink as many fluids as possible. You may be required to stay overnight and if so you will be discharged the next morning.

**RISKS:** Although it is uncommon, headache associated with the needle puncture is a risk. The headache, when it occurs following myelography, usually begins when the patient begins to sit upright or stand.

Other very rare complications of myelography include nerve injury from the spinal needle or bleeding around the nerve roots in the spinal canal. The meninges covering the spinal cord can become inflamed or infected. Seizures are a very uncommon myelogram complication.