

# Lumbar Puncture: Frequently Asked Questions

## What Is a Lumbar Puncture?

A lumbar puncture, also called a spinal tap, is a procedure to collect a small amount of the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) that bathes the spine and brain. A small needle is inserted between two of the bones of the spine in the lower back, and a sample of fluid is withdrawn. Researchers can then analyze this fluid in the laboratory.

## How Are Lumbar Puncture Results Used for Research?

Cerebrospinal fluid holds a great amount of information about health. Because it circulates around the brain, CSF opens a window into the brain's function. In CSF collected by lumbar puncture, researchers evaluate levels of proteins and other chemicals to learn about changes that occur in individuals with Parkinson's disease (PD). Measuring changes in CSF may one day help track progression of PD or determine whether medications can slow or stop its progress.

## Is a Lumbar Puncture Painful?

You may experience discomfort during the procedure. People who have undergone lumbar puncture report minimal to moderate pain. The doctor usually numbs the area with an anesthetic injection before the lumbar puncture, and this may cause a few seconds of stinging or burning.

## What Risks Are Associated with a Lumbar Puncture?

As with any medical procedure, there are some risks associated with a lumbar puncture. You may develop a headache after the procedure; however, headaches usually resolve if you rest and drink plenty of fluid. If you experience a headache for more than 24 hours, contact the study team.

## Will I Be Notified about My Lumbar Puncture Results?

Researchers will test your CSF using standard clinical methods and the information will be used for research purposes. Study personnel will contact you if the results require further consultation.

