

What to Expect After Your Lumbar Puncture

At Harborview Medical Center - Radiology

This handout gives important self-care instructions to follow after your lumbar puncture at Harborview Radiology.

For Your Safety

Do **not** drive yourself home or ride public transport by yourself after your procedure. Plan for a responsible adult to drive you home or to ride with you on a bus, Uber, or taxi.

When You Get Home

- You may feel lightheaded or dizzy.
- Take it easy for the rest of the day.
- It may be helpful to have someone stay with you overnight.



Take it easy for the rest of the day after your lumbar puncture.

Self-care

- You may eat as usual and take your usual medicines, unless your care providers tell you otherwise.
- **Over the next 24 hours:** Drink at least 8 glasses (8 ounces each) of fluid such as juice, water, or a sports drink.
- **For 2 days:** Do **not** take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming. Soaking your body in water increases your risk of infection. It is OK to shower.
- **For 3 days:**
 - Avoid any activity that increases your heart or breathing rate.
 - Do **not** bend over.
 - Do **not** lift anything that weighs more than 10 pounds. (A gallon of water weighs almost 9 pounds.)

Headaches, Fever, and Nausea

If you get a headache:

- Lie flat in bed.
- Rest and drink plenty of liquids.
- If needed, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain.

When to Call

Call us if your headache is severe or lasts more than 2 days, if you have a fever, or if you have a lot of nausea and vomiting.

- Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call Harborview Radiology at 206.744.6741.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.744.3000 and ask to page the Radiology Resident on call.

If You Had Sedation

For **24 hours** after your procedure:

- Do **not** drink alcohol.
- Do **not** take sleeping pills or tranquilizers, unless your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Do **not** take prochlorperazine (Compazine) for nausea.
- Do **not** sign legal papers or make important decisions.
- Do **not** use machines or power tools.
- Do **not** drive.
- Do **not** be responsible for children, pets, or an adult who needs care.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Harborview Radiology:
206.744.6741