



Pain Care Associates

A Division of Neuro Pain Consultants, P.C.

*A multidisciplinary practice
dedicated to the relief of pain.*

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D I S C O G R A M



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DISCOGRAM

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What is a discogram?



A discogram is a diagnostic test done to determine the specific location of pain originating in the spine. A MRI will show degenerative changes in the spine

and while several discs will appear abnormal, not all will generate painful symptoms. When conventional imaging such as x-ray, MRI, or CT scan fail to show a specific problem a discogram may be used. This diagnostic test is usually done prior to a potential procedure or surgery such as a fusion.

How is a discogram performed?

Disc injections are performed in the procedure room using fluoroscopy (x-ray). The patient is positioned on the fluoroscopy table and the discs to be treated are identified. The skin is then frozen. A needle is inserted into the disc using x-ray guidance and dye is injected.. The patient is awake during this procedure and is asked to report what he/she is feeling. When a disc is abnormal it will produce pain identical to the pain that is usually experienced by the patient. The patient will receive pain medication during and after the procedure as needed, but must remain awake during the procedure.

What are the potential risks with a discogram?

As with any invasive procedure there is the risk of infection and bleeding at the injection site. It is common to have localized pain at the needle puncture site. Generally, ice applied to this area is helpful. Rarely, nerve damage can occur.

What are the expected benefits of this treatment?

Following the discogram it is usually necessary to have a CAT scan of the discs that were tested to complete the exam. The dye used to inject the disc will provide further information regarding the extent of disc disease and degeneration upon review of these films.

