What you should know about your **Spinal Tap (Lumbar Puncture)**

**Purpose:**
A spinal tap is performed to obtain a sample of your spinal fluid for testing.

**Preparation:**
- You will be contacted by hospital personnel a few days prior to your exam to review your medical history and any allergies you may have.
- You should not eat anything eight hours prior to your exam.
- You should not drink anything two hours before your exam.

**While at the hospital you should expect:**
- We will verify your name and date of birth.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to wear a gown during the exam.
- You may be asked to remove jewelry, eye glasses and any metal objects that may interfere with the x-rays.

**Procedure: What to Expect**
- You will be asked to verify your name, date of birth and the exam you are having done.
- Before your exam begins, a nurse will ask you about any allergies you may have, current medications, medical history and may also take your vital signs.
- Prior to signing the consent for the exam, the radiologist will talk with you about the exam and answer any questions you may have.
- The radiologist and technologist will perform your spinal tap together.
- You will need to lie on your stomach for the exam.
- The radiologist will clean the area of your back by using a sterile technique. He or she will also inject Lidocaine, which will numb the area of interest.
- Once the area is numb, the radiologist will place a needle into the space around the spinal column.
- We will collect a sample of spinal fluid from the spinal column.
- The needle is removed and a Band-aid is placed where the needle was inserted.
- You should expect to be in the imaging department for approximately 60 minutes.
After the Test:

- It will take approximately two hours to recover. You will rest in your hospital room or in the Short Stay Unit.
- You will have your head raised slightly, no more than 30 degrees.
- Your vital signs will be taken often during the first hour.
- Rest for 24 hours after your exam. After 24 hours, you may return to your usual activities.
- Your exam will be read by a radiologist and the report will be sent to your physician.

**Note**  You will be exposed to a very small amount of ionizing radiation which carries no long term risk. Women should always inform their physician or x-ray technologist if there is any chance of pregnancy.

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<td>(717) 851-4624</td>
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