A lumbar puncture
What is it?

A lumbar puncture means putting a needle into my back.

- The needle goes into my spinal column where there is fluid. Everybody has spinal fluid.
What is a lumbar puncture for?

A lumbar puncture lets the doctor take fluid from my spinal column.

- The results help the doctor to understand my illness better.

Sometimes a lumbar puncture is used to give me medicine.

- The medicine goes into the fluid in my spinal column.
What happens?

A lumbar puncture is done at the hospital or the clinic.

Before the lumbar puncture

A nurse puts an anaesthetic cream on my back.

- The cream makes my skin go to sleep.
The doctor may give me medicine to help me relax.

The person accompanying me can stay with me.
I wait two hours

I take my clothes off

- The nurse gives me a white gown and takes off my plaster

La blouse est ouverte derrière
If I have long hair, I must tie it back.
The doctor gives me a lumbar puncture

A nurse helps the doctor during the lumbar puncture

The nurse helps me into the right position

- On the side of the bed
- Or lying on my side
I need to arch my back.

The person accompanying me helps me stay in that position.
This gas helps me stay calm and it hurts less.

I breathe through a mask until the treatment is over.

To find out more, read our MEOPA fact-sheet
The doctor puts on gloves

They clean my skin with a liquid
They give me an anaesthetic injection

- The injection makes my skin go to sleep

Now I don’t feel anything
They give me an anaesthetic injection
- The injection makes my skin go to sleep

To make the puncture, the doctor puts a needle into my back
- The needle is very thin

- It’s not nice
- It is quick
- I must stay still
The fluid runs into small tubes

After, the nurse sends the tubes to the laboratory
Sometimes, the doctor puts medicine into my spinal column

The doctor takes the needle out and puts a plaster on my back
After the lumbar puncture

I stay lying on my back for a few hours

So I don’t get a headache

I stay in hospital under observation

- I have to drink water
If my back hurts or I have a headache:

- I can ask for a pill

The doctor decides when I can go home
When I get home on the day of my lumbar puncture, I must rest.
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SantéBD is a project by the NGO CoActis Santé. [contact@coactis-sante.fr](mailto:contact@coactis-sante.fr)

SantéBD booklets are produced in partnership with different participants from the world of healthcare and working with disabilities. Illustrations by Frédérique Mercier.

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*The creation of this tool was made possible with the support of:*

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