

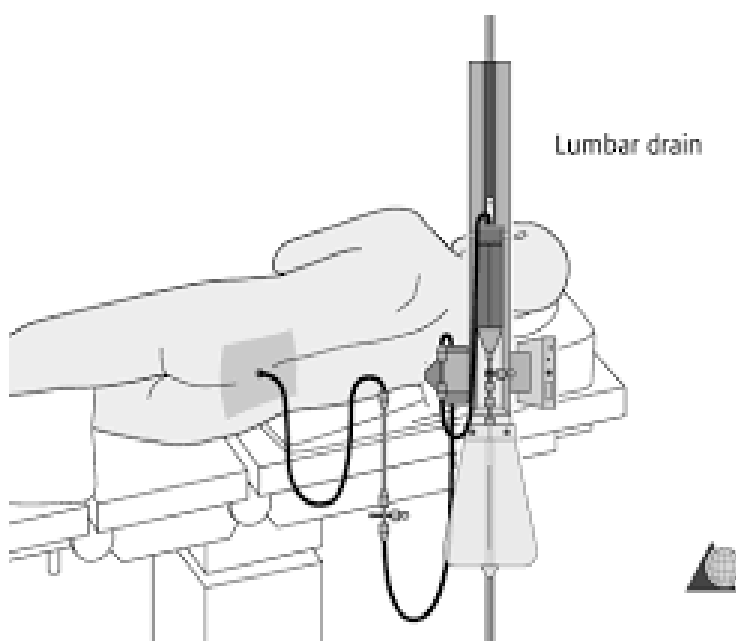
Nicholls Ward

Lumbar Drain: Parent Information

This leaflet explains lumbar drains, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what you can expect when your child comes to hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

What is a lumbar drain?

A lumbar drain is a small flexible tube inserted into the lower part of your child's back to drain cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) under general anaesthetic. This tube is then connected to a hard plastic drainage system outside of your child. It is a short-term drainage system that allows fluid to drain from your child's brain.



What is cerebral spinal fluid (CSF)?

CSF is fluid that is made in chambers in the brain called the ventricles and it protects the brain and spinal cord by providing cushioning, support and nutrients.

Why does my child need a lumbar drain?

A lumbar drain is inserted to assist in the healing of a CSF leak that may occur after surgery. By having a lumbar drain it provides a different pathway for CSF to drain. The drain reduces CSF pressure on your child's head allowing the site of leakage to heal.

Nursing care of the lumbar drain

The nurse will monitor the drain very closely to ensure:

- it is draining properly
- the drain set up is correct
- the dressing on your child's back is dry
- the colour and amount of CSF draining is appropriate.

What are the risks of a lumbar drain?

Infection, nerve irritation, bleeding, leakage of CSF, over drainage and air entering the brain space are all risks associated with lumbar drain placement.

Taking care of your child while the drain is inserted

The nursing staff will show you how to clamp the drain so if your child moves position or becomes upset, you can clamp it and call for your nurse to re-level the drain.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RE-LEVEL OR UNCLAMP THE DRAIN. ONLY THE NURSES OR DOCTORS CAN DO THIS.

The nursing staff will assist you with your child's needs such as a daily wash and position changes especially whilst the lumbar drain is in place.

Neurological assessment

The nursing staff will regularly check your child's temperature, blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate, limb movements and pupil reaction. If your child is asleep when these observations are to be done, they will be awoken. This includes during the night. Your child must be awoken to ensure their neurological status is checked and that the drain is working correctly. Please alert nursing staff immediately if your child complains of any of the following:

- headaches
- blurred vision
- nausea or vomiting
- irritability
- drowsiness
- tingling sensations in their arms or legs
- does not seem "to be themselves".

Mobility

Depending on your child's condition and the doctors' advice, your child may be able to walk as normal or may be restricted to bed. In either case the nurse must be informed of patient movement to make sure that the drain can be monitored and adjusted.

Safety

If able, your child should be sat up to eat and drink, your nurse will assist you with changing their position as they need to adjust the drain. If your child is unable to sit up and is lying flat, they must always be supervised when eating and drinking to prevent them from choking. The nursing staff should be keeping a record of what your child is eating and drinking and will involve a dietitian if they feel it appropriate.

Pain

The drain itself should not cause pain, however paracetamol will be available as needed and additional pain relief depending on your child's condition.

Play

You and your nurse will work together to ensure that your child keeps their hands away from their drain so that it is not accidentally dislodged; this can be done by providing play and distraction. One of our play therapists will assist in providing appropriate toys and stimulation to encourage your child's mental, physical and social development.

Please feel free to bring in your child's favourite toys. Play therapists are available Monday to Friday to help keep your child active and stimulated while the lumbar drain is in place.

After the drain is removed

The drain will be removed on the ward by the neurosurgeon. Removal of the drain may need suturing. Following removal, your child may need to lay flat for up to four hours to prevent headaches. The nurse will also regularly check the site where the drain was inserted to ensure there is no leak or sign of infection.

Contact us

Clinical Nurse Specialists in Paediatric Neurosciences

(Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)

Telephone: 020 8725 2649

E-mail: paedneurocns@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Out of hours:

Nicholls ward 020 8725 3389 or 020 8725 2098

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Was this information helpful? Yes / No

Please let us know, contact patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk and include the leaflet title.

Thank you.

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

