

## Lumbar Puncture – Shared Decision Making for Febrile Infants



- Your child has a fever. At this age, a fever may be the only sign of a serious infection.
- There are several options for how we next care for your child.
- Right now, your baby’s blood and urine tests are reassuring, but they may still have an infection around the brain, called meningitis.
- The overall risk of this type of infection is low, but we know a small number of babies like your child may have meningitis.
- We check for meningitis by testing the fluid around the brain using a needle inserted in the spine. This procedure is called a lumbar puncture or “LP”.
- An LP is a very safe procedure, but some people find them scary or uncomfortable to think about.
- These are the options that we can consider together. Please be sure to voice all concerns or worries that you have, so we can help you make a choice that is right for your child.

<b>Collect your baby’s spinal fluid and the results are normal.</b>	<b>Hold off on doing an LP to get the spinal fluid.</b>
Give your baby a dose of antibiotics and discharge you home to see your baby’s pediatrician tomorrow.	Admit your baby to the hospital to observe without medications and do the test only if your baby appears sick.

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### How is a lumbar puncture (LP) performed?

- A numbing cream is applied to the skin beforehand. Numbing medicine is often also injected where the needle will be inserted to minimize discomfort.
- Babies are also given a sweet medicine to suck on during the procedure.
- Your baby will be laid on their side or bent forward while sitting. A staff member will help hold your baby in this safe position throughout the procedure.
- After cleaning your baby’s skin and using sterile equipment to prevent infection, the doctor or nurse practitioner will insert a needle into their lower back to collect the fluid that surrounds the brain and spine.
- This fluid is called cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
- Sometimes the provider is not able to collect the fluid on the first try. If this happens, they will try again using a new needle.
- Once fluid is collected, the needle will be removed, the area cleaned, and a band-aid will be placed over the insertion site.
- Your baby will be monitored by our medical team the entire time.

\*Some families prefer to remain in the room when the lumbar puncture is performed. Others are more comfortable stepping outside during the procedure. Both are reasonable choices.

<b>Benefits of Doing the Lumbar Puncture</b>	<b>Risks of Lumbar Puncture</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Possibly go home from the hospital if the results are normal</li><li>- Ability to detect or partially rule out infection around the brain</li><li>- Identify the virus or bacteria causing the infection to help determine what treatment is needed</li><li>- Earlier detection and treatment of brain infections can decrease risk of neurologic complications and even death</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Infant Discomfort</li><li>- Parental Anxiety</li><li>- Potential for brief infant distress due to positioning during the procedure</li><li>- Risk of bleeding, infection, and nerve damage is very low</li><li>- The procedure is unsuccessful (fluid can’t be collected) and may have to be repeated later</li></ul>