DO NOT FORGET · THE SHORT CHECKLIST



Lumbar puncture

Sampling cerebrospinal fluid from the lumbar subarachnoid space to diagnose meningitis, encephalitis or subarachnoid haemorrhage, and to measure opening pressure.

EM Orbit

Patient reference	Date	Time	Completed by

The 3 steps that must not be missed

- [ ] BEFORE
If bacterial meningitis is suspected, give empirical antibiotics immediately and do not wait for the LP.
Take blood cultures first if this causes no delay; antibiotics can still be followed by an LP within hours.

- [ ] BEFORE
Do not perform LP if there are clinical or CT signs of raised intracranial pressure or significant mass effect.
Risk of cerebral herniation. A normal CT does not exclude raised pressure if clinical signs are present.

- [ ] DURING
Stop and withdraw if the patient reports sharp, shooting pain or paraesthesia down a leg.
The needle is touching a nerve root; redirect towards the side away from the pain.



The short list: an aid to memory, not the whole procedure. The full checklist is at the QR code. It does not replace your local protocol or your clinical judgement.