



CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

Information that will help you stay healthy

Your doctor has recommended a test called cardiac **catheterization**. This test shows if there are problems within your heart or if any of the arteries that supply your heart with blood are blocked.

In this **test**, a thin tube called a catheter is inserted into an artery and guided to the heart. A special dye (which is visible by X-ray) is injected through the catheter. The X-rays show where any problems may be. Cardiac catheterization can show:

- how well the heart is pumping
- if any of the coronary arteries are blocked
- if the heart valves are **working** properly
- if you were born with a heart defect
- if the heart has **been** damaged by disease

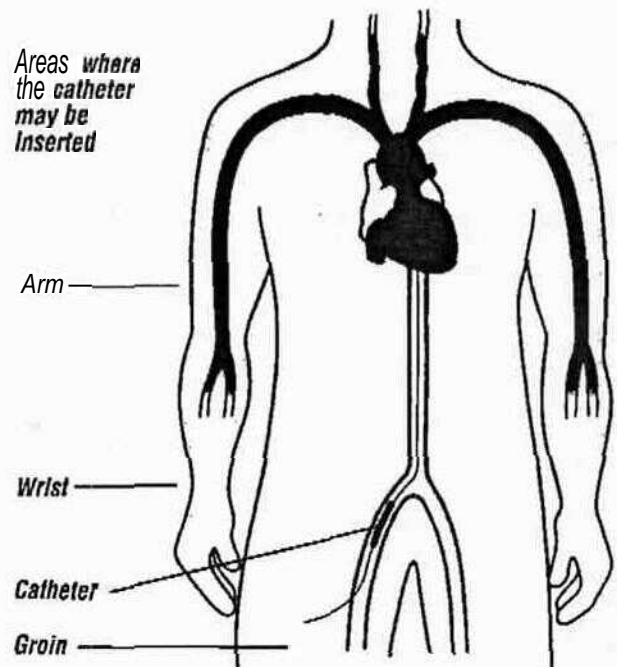
BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

Report any allergies you **have**. Since X-ray dye contains iodine, it is important to report allergies to shellfish (which contain **iodine**) and X-ray dye. If you are allergic to iodine, you may be given medication to prevent a reaction. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or are taking aspirin or blood **thinners**. Do not eat or drink anything for 6 to 8 hours before the test. The area where the catheter is inserted may be cleaned and shaved. You may be given medication to help you relax.

This test is done in a special area of the hospital or outpatient center. In this area you will see an X-ray camera and monitors that look like TV screens. These monitors let your doctor see your arteries and your heart as the test is being **done**. ECG pads may be placed on your body to check your heart.

The area **where** the catheter will be inserted is numbered. A small opening is made in the artery in this area.

A small tube called an introducer sheath will be placed in the artery. The catheter passes through the sheath and is guided to your heart.

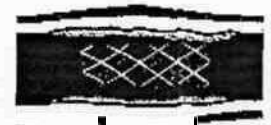


X-ray dye is **injected** through the catheter so your doctor can get a picture of your heart. As the dye is injected you may feel warm or light-headed for a few seconds. After reviewing the X-rays, your doctor may decide that a **nonsurgical** procedure, such as a stent, or bypass surgery may be needed to improve blood flow.

Angioplasty. Balloon-tipped catheter presses fatty deposits against the artery wall, making a wider opening for blood flow.



Stent. Small mesh device is placed in the artery to hold it open so more blood can **get to the heart**.



Bypass surgery. A **Wood vessel** from another part of the body is used to bypass the blocked artery so more blood can **get to the heart**.

Oiler procedures. Other procedures also may be recommended. Your doctor **will decide** which procedure is best for you.

If your doctor determines that a nonsurgical procedure is needed, it may be done at the time of the **catheterization**, or you may be asked to return at another time for the procedure.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

The catheter and the **sheath** will be removed when the procedure is done. You will stay connected to the heart monitor for a while. Your pulse and blood pressure will be checked. You will be given fluids through an IV.

If your groin (leg) was used as an Insertion **site**, the catheter and sheath may be removed at the same **time**, or they may be left in place for a while. If the catheter and sheath are removed at the **same** time, the insertion site may be sealed with **stitches** or a plug. If the sheath is left in place, you must lie flat (with your leg straight) for a few hours. When the sheath is removed, pressure may be used to seal the area. A bandage may be **applied**.

If your arm or wrist was used as an **insertion** site, the catheter and sheath may be removed at the same time. A pressure bandage may be placed over the site. Avoid moving your arm or wrist for a short time.

DURING YOUR RECOVERY

You will be **told** when you can get up and move about. You may be asked to drink extra fluids to **flush** out the dye that was injected into your artery.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have:

- chest pain or discomfort in your neck, jaw, **arms**, or back
- shortness of breath
- weakness or dizziness
- discomfort or bleeding at the insertion site

Your doctor will tell you when you can go home. Many people can return to their usual activities in 1 or 2 days. Ask your doctor when you can participate in sports, exercise and other activities. Do not push or pull heavy objects or lift more than **10** pounds for at least 2 weeks (or as long as your doctor tells you to). Avoid strenuous activities for a few days.

Your doctor may prescribe medication to help your heart and blood vessels. Tell your doctor about all of the other medication (prescription and nonprescription) you take. Take your medication exactly as prescribed.

TEST RESULTS

Feeling uncertain about your health can be stressful for you and your family. Having cardiac catheterization eases anxiety and takes the burden of guesswork off you and your doctor. Because you have had this test, you know that any advice about **treatment** is based on facts discovered during your **catheterization**.

You may be advised to make some changes in the way you live to reduce the risk of future heart and blood vessel problems. A nonsurgical treatment may be recommended, or you may be advised to have surgery. Whatever your doctor's **recommendation**, you can rest assured that it is based on the best possible information.

IF YOU HAVE **CORONARY** ARTERY DISEASE

If your doctor tells you that one or more of your coronary arteries is blocked with fatty deposits (a condition called coronary artery disease), you will need to make some changes to control your risk factors.

Risk factors are habits or characteristics that increase your chance of developing coronary artery disease. Some risk **factors**, such as age, are beyond your control. But if you reduce the risks you can **control**, you may prevent a heart attack, stroke, or other health problems. Here are some things you can do:

- give up tobacco
- control high blood pressure (with a low-sodium **diet**, exercise and medication - if prescribed)
- control high blood cholesterol (with a low-fat **diet**, exercise and medication - if prescribed)
- exercise regularly (5 to 6 times a week for at least 30 minutes each time)
- maintain a healthy weight
- **learn** healthy ways to manage stress

Being committed to making healthy lifestyle changes and taking care of yourself is your best defense against future **health problems**.