

Cardiac catheterisation

Cardiology Department Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to address some of the questions you might have including:

- What is cardiac catheterisation?
- What does cardiac catheterisation involve?
- Why do I need cardiac catheterisation?
- What should I bring when I come to hospital?
- What do I need to do before I come to hospital?
- What happens when I arrive at hospital?
- What happens in the catheter laboratory?
- What happens back in the day case room?
- Is the procedure safe?
- When will I find out my results?
- When can I go home?

Unfamiliar terms:

- Cardiac: relating to the heart
- Catheter: thin, flexible tube
- Cannula: small plastic tube placed in a vein
- Catheter laboratory: room where the procedure takes place

What is cardiac catheterisation?

It is a test which provides your consultant with detailed information about your heart and its blood vessels (coronary arteries). This helps your consultant to choose the best treatment for you. Currently this is the best test for assessing the coronary arteries.

What does cardiac catheterisation involve?

It involves feeding a narrow, flexible tube (catheter) up through a blood vessel in your wrist or groin until it reaches your heart. Once in position, the doctor carrying out the test can use it to flush a dye into the heart and take X-ray pictures.

On average, the procedure lasts between 20 to 40 minutes and you can almost always go home the same day.

Why do I need cardiac catheterisation?

You may need cardiac catheterisation to:

1. Find a reason for symptoms you may have been experiencing such as chest pain or shortness of breath.
2. Explain the abnormal results of previous heart tests e.g. an electrocardiogram (ECG) or an exercise tolerance test (ETT).
3. Decide which treatment option is best for you. This may include management with medication, insertion of a stent or surgery.

What should I bring when I come to hospital?

Please bring:

- A dressing gown
- A pair of slippers
- If you need them: spectacles, hearing aids, walking aids
- Something to read or occupy you
- Your medication
- Your anticoagulation booklet, if you are on warfarin tablets

What do I need to do before I come into hospital?

When you receive your appointment letter for the cardiac catheterisation test, it will ask you to come to the hospital for a MRSA swab, if you have not already one. You will need to have this swab at least five days before your cardiac catheterisation test. **If you do not have the swab, the test will be cancelled.** To arrange the swab, please contact the MRSA screening team on 01384 456111 ext 1657.

Please shave your right groin area (your pubic area) the night before your test in case the doctor decides to insert the catheter there.

Please remove any nail varnish or make up.

Please remove all jewellery except wedding rings.

Please do not wear contact lenses.

If you smoke, we would advise that you do **not** do so for 48 hours before your appointment. This is because smoking will decrease the levels of oxygen in your cells and it can affect any medications you are given during the procedure.

Food and drink

If you have a morning appointment:

Have an early breakfast at 6am on the day of the procedure. After this, please do not eat until after the test and only drink plain water.

If you have an afternoon appointment:

On the day of the procedure, from 11am please do not eat until after the test and only drink plain water.

You will be given something to eat after the procedure.

Medication

Please take your usual heart and blood pressure medication on the morning of the test.

Other medication:

You can take other medications, except if you take any of the following medications, please follow the instructions:

Metformin – there is a very small risk of a reaction with the dye used during the procedure so please stop taking it 48 hours before the procedure. Do not start taking the metformin again until 24 hours after the procedure.

If you are worried about your blood glucose levels just before or after the procedure, please talk to your GP.

Warfarin – there is an increased risk of bleeding following the procedure so please stop taking your warfarin tablets three nights before your appointment day. This will allow your blood to thicken very slightly so the procedure can be performed.

Rivaroxaban – there is an increased risk of bleeding following the procedure so please stop taking your rivaroxaban tablets 24 hours before your appointment day. This will allow your blood to thicken very slightly so the procedure can be performed.

Transport

You should not drive for 48 hours after the procedure and you will not be able to use public transport to go home. Therefore, please arrange for a relative or friend to come and collect you after the test.

When you arrive at the hospital, a nurse will ask you for this person's telephone number so that they can ring them for you when you are ready to be collected. They will need to be available to collect you within one hour of being telephoned.

If you cannot be collected, your GP can arrange transport for you. You will need a relative or friend to look after you at home for 24 hours after the procedure.

Personal property

Please note that the hospital cannot accept responsibility for your property so we advise you to leave valuables at home.

What happens when I arrive at hospital?

Please make your way to day case room in the **Cardiology Department** no more than 15 minutes before your appointment time.

When you arrive you will be greeted by a nurse who will ask you some questions and measure your weight, blood pressure, pulse and temperature. Very occasionally the test may be postponed if these measurements find something that needs to be sorted out, such as very high blood pressure.

A small plastic tube (cannula) will be inserted into the back of your hand, just in case you need to be given any medication during the procedure.

Before you go into the catheter laboratory the procedure will be explained to you again. **Please feel free to ask any questions at this point.** If you are happy to go ahead with the procedure, you will be asked to sign a form giving your written consent.

Please note that the procedure uses X-rays and these use a small amount of radiation which may add slightly to the normal risk of cancer. It is hospital policy to offer all female patients, aged 15 to 55 years, a pregnancy test on the day of the procedure.

What happens in the catheter laboratory?

Before the procedure

Once everything is ready, you will be taken into the catheter laboratory and asked to lie down on the X-ray table. A member of staff will attach you to a heart monitor.

The doctor will then numb the catheter entry site (either your wrist or groin) with local anaesthetic. A small cut will be made to allow the doctor to insert a short plastic tube (sheath) into the blood vessel closest to the cut.

During the procedure

The doctor will feed a long, thin, flexible tube (cardiac catheter) through the sheath and up the blood vessel in your arm or your leg until it reaches your heart. This is done very carefully using X-ray pictures as a guide. When the tube is inside the blood vessel you should not be able to feel it.

When the tube is in position, the doctor can:

1. Measure blood pressure in and around your heart.
2. Take pictures of the blood flow in the heart and the surrounding blood vessels using an X-ray machine.
3. Take blood samples.
4. Take a sample (biopsy) from your heart muscle.

When the doctor flushes the X-ray dye (contrast) into your heart, you will feel a warm sensation flood over you. When this feeling reaches your groin it can sometimes feel as though you have wet yourself. You will not have wet yourself, it is just the effect of the dye.

After the procedure

Once the test is complete, the tube will be removed and firm pressure will be applied over the entry site to prevent too much bleeding. If this is the wrist, you will need to wear a pressure bracelet for at least two hours. If this is the groin, a member of staff will apply firm pressure for five to 10 minutes. You will then return to the day case room.

What happens back in the day case room?

When you get back to the day case room you will be looked after by the nursing staff. They will make sure that you are feeling OK and give you something to eat and drink. It is important to drink in order to flush the dye out of your body.

If the catheter was put in through your wrist, you will be able to sit up and walk about.

If the catheter was put in through your groin, you will be asked to stay lying in bed for three hours. This is very important because it will stop too much bleeding from the groin.

Is the procedure safe?

This is a routine procedure with a very low risk of major complications (less than one in a thousand). However, it is important that you are aware of the most serious complications, which include a heart attack, stroke and death. Other complications include an irregular heart rate, blood vessel damage or bleeding from the catheter entry site and very rarely, the X-ray dye can cause kidney damage.

If complications arise, the doctor may decide to keep you in hospital overnight just to make sure you are well when you go home.

Please note that 99.9 per cent of patients do not experience any problems.

When will I find out my results?

After the procedure the doctor will tell you what he found. If you need to have your medications changed, this will be done before you leave. A letter will be posted to your GP to tell them what was found and an outpatient appointment letter will be sent to you, if required.

When can I go home?

You can go home two to four hours after the procedure has finished as long as your blood pressure and pulse are OK and the catheter entry site is not bleeding. The nurse will give you an information sheet that has instructions about what you should do if you start to bleed again. **Please feel free to ask any questions at this point.**

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact the nurse in charge in:

Cardiology day case unit on 01384 456111 ext 2573 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Coronary Care Unit on 01384 244138 (out of these hours)

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/cardiology/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510

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کہ یہ سب سے زیادہ سہولتوں کے لئے-آؤٹریٹنگ ٹول 0800 0730510 ٹیلیفون نمبر سے سہولت ہے۔

यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज़ अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो पेशेंट इनफॉर्मेशन को-ऑर्डिनेटर को
टेलीफोन नम्बर 0800 0730510 पर फोन करें।

જો તમને આ પત્રિકા તમારી પોતાની ભાષા (ગુજરાતી)માં જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને પેશન્ટ ઇન્ફોર્મેશન કો-ઓર્ડિનેટરનો
0800 0730510 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

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কো-অর্ডিনেটরের সাথে 0800 0730510 এই নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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0800 0730510 على التلفون Information Co-ordinator

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