



Angiography

About this Procedure

An angiogram is an X-ray picture of the inside of your blood vessels. A catheter (a long, slim tube) is placed into your artery (a blood vessel that takes blood away from the heart). Contrast agent is then sent through the catheter. X-rays are taken to help find any problems. The insides of your blood vessels are checked to see if they are narrowed, leaking, enlarged, or blocked. This helps your provider decide on the best treatment for you.

How Does It Work?

The nurse will stay with you during the procedure to watch your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate, and your comfort level.

- A radiology technologist will clean your skin with a special soap and may shave some hair in the areas that the doctor will be working on.
- The nurse may place a tube in your bladder to drain urine.
- Angiography involves placing a long, slim tube (called a catheter) into a blood vessel in the groin. To prevent you from feeling pain during catheter placement, you will be given a numbing drug at the groin site. You will also be given a drug through your IV to help you relax and feel as comfortable as possible. The catheter will be placed and guided to the problem blood vessel. Contrast (X-ray dye) is then sent into your blood vessel. You may feel a warm to hot flush spreading all over your body when the contrast goes in. You may also feel like you have to urinate or have a bowel movement. These feelings are normal and should only last a few seconds.
- X-rays are taken while the contrast moves through your blood vessel. The X-rays show where an artery might be blocked, narrowed, leaking, or enlarged.
- The catheter is removed and a pressure bandage will be placed over the puncture site. This step takes about 20 to 30 minutes depending on how long it takes your blood to clot. The pressure bandage will prevent you from bleeding during this time.
- An angiogram takes about 1 hour if it is done on an outpatient basis. If an intervention is needed to fix a problem, more time will be needed, and you may be admitted to the hospital overnight.

How Do I Prepare?

Tell your health-care provider if you have had any kidney problems or reactions to iodine-containing items such as contrast agent or seafood. If so, your primary health-care provider will prescribe medicine for you to take before the procedure.

Eat a light meal the night before, but do not eat or drink after midnight. If you have a late afternoon appointment, you may have clear liquids for breakfast (such as apple juice, Jell-o, or clear broth), but nothing after that.

If you are a diabetic, you will need to consult your primary doctor about what you cannot eat and how you should control your diabetic medications.

What Can I Expect?

When you arrive, check in at the front desk in Imaging Services.

- You will then change into a hospital gown. You will be given a bag for your belongings.
- You will be taken to a special area where a nurse will see you and ask you questions about your health history.
- An IV (intravenous line) will be started to give you fluid and medicine during the procedure.
- The radiology doctor will see you in this area to discuss the procedure and obtain your consent. You will be able to ask any questions you have at this time.

Risks/Complications

What are the possible risks of an angiogram?

You may have:

- An allergic reaction to the contrast, which may cause hives, a drop in blood pressure, swelling of the skin, or unconsciousness.
- Minor discomfort if the local anesthetic does not completely numb the area and/or an allergic reaction to the drug used in the local anesthetic.
- A kidney problem that is made worse by the contrast.
- A clot that forms around the catheter and blocks your blood vessel.
- An injury to the groin artery from placement of the catheter, causing bleeding or a blockage of blood flow to the leg.
- Surgery to correct damage caused by the procedure.
- An infection from the puncture site.

After the Procedure

What should I expect after my procedure?

You will be watched closely for a short time in the Imaging Services department.

Patients are usually monitored for 4 to 6 hours and must remain flat in bed during most of this time to reduce the likelihood of bleeding from the groin site. Plan to stay for this length of time.

Most patients then go to a short-stay unit within the hospital, unless your referring doctor has made other plans.

You should be able to eat, drink, and take your normal medicines.

Your family member or driver may go with you to this area.

If an intervention was needed, you may need to stay overnight.

Before you leave, a nurse will give you a written plan to follow when you are home. Make sure you know when to come back for a follow-up visit.

What warning signs or symptoms should I watch for?

Call your provider right away if:

- Your leg or foot becomes cold or numb.
- The puncture site begins to bleed, swell, or becomes more painful.
- You have slurred speech, balance problems, or trouble using your arm.
- You develop a rash.

Your Results

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist trained to interpret angiograms will review the pictures and send a report to your doctor, who will give you your test results. The radiologist will not discuss the results with you. Based on the findings, you and your primary care doctor will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

Questions ?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Radiological Consultants, Inc. staff are also available to help at any time.

Radiological Consultants
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