

Angiogram

An angiogram shows the blood vessels in the body. A tube called a catheter is put into a vein at the top of your leg in your groin or in your arm. It is then guided into the area to be tested. Dye is put through the catheter. X-rays are taken as the dye pumps through the blood vessels. This test checks the blood flow in your body.

An angiogram is also called a peripheral angioplasty or balloon angioplasty. An angioplasty may be done with an angiogram if you have narrowed blood vessels. With this procedure, a balloon on the end of the catheter will be used to open up the blood vessel to improve blood flow. A small tube-like device called a stent may be placed in the blood vessel to keep the blood vessel open.

An adult family member or friend will need to take you home after the test. It is not safe for you to drive or leave alone. Your family is to wait during the test.

Arrive on time for your test. The test takes about 1 to 2 hours. Plan to be here about 4 hours to be checked after the test.

To Prepare

- Talk to your doctor about your medicines before this test. Ask about other tests you may need.
- Do not eat food after midnight before the test.
- Ask your doctor if you should take your medicines the morning of the test. If so, take with sips of water only.
- Tell your doctor if you have allergies to dye or iodine, shellfish or latex.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.

During the Test

- You may wear hearing aids, dentures and glasses. Jewelry and watches will need to be taken off. Leave valuables at home.
- You will wear a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) is put into a vein in your arm. Medicines to help you relax and fluids are given through your IV.
- The lights in the room may be turned down and the room may seem cool. You will be awake, so you can tell the staff how you feel.
- Small pads are put on your chest to check your heart. For men, chest hair may need to be clipped.
- A blood pressure cuff is put on your arm. Your blood pressure and heart rate are checked often.
- The catheter site, either your groin or your arm, is cleaned. The hair in the groin area will be clipped if needed.

- The doctor numbs your catheter site. This may sting for a few seconds. After this, you should only feel pressure and no pain. **Tell the staff if you have any pain during the test.**
- The catheter is put into a large blood vessel and then moved into the area to be tested.
- Dye is injected. You may feel hot or flushed for a few seconds.
- X-rays are taken as the dye moves through your blood vessels. You may be asked to hold your breath at times.
- If you have narrowed blood vessels, the balloon area of the catheter is moved to the narrowed area of the blood vessel. The balloon is inflated to push open the narrowed blood vessel. You may feel some chest pressure, but the pressure should ease quickly. **Tell the staff how you are feeling.**
- A stent may be placed to keep the blood vessel open.
- Dye may be given again to see how much of the blood vessel has been opened.
- When the test is done, the catheter is removed.
- Pressure is put on the site for 10 to 20 minutes, so it does not bleed. A stitch or plug may be used to close the catheter site. A clamp is put on for about 1 hour to stop bleeding. A band-aid or dressing is put on the site.

After the Test

- You will be taken to another bed. You will rest for about 4 hours.
- Keep the leg or arm straight where the catheter was placed to prevent bleeding.
- Your site, pulse and blood pressure will be checked often.
- Tell your nurse **right away** if the site swells or bleeds, or if you feel pain, numbness or tingling in your leg or arm.
- You can eat and drink.
- It is not safe for you to drive or leave alone. An adult family member or friend will need to take you home.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

Your Care at Home

Today

- Rest at home for 24 hours.
- Limit stair climbing.
- Drink 8 cups or 2 liters of liquids (non-alcoholic) to flush the dye out of your kidneys.
- Eat your normal diet.
- Remove the pressure bandage at bedtime and put on a clean band-aid.
- Keep the site dry. Do not shower or bathe.
- Look at the site for bruising or a lump.

Other Care

- Do not take a tub bath for 1 week after the test. You can take a shower. Do not scrub the site.
- Do not take the medicine Glucophage (metformin) for 2 days after the test.
- Do not drive for 2 to 3 days.
- Do not exercise, run or lift objects over 10 pounds or 4.5 kilograms for 3 days after the test.
- Check the site for bruising or a lump.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Bleeding at the site that will not stop
- Swelling, redness, more bruising or tenderness at the site
- Drainage or warmth at the site
- Coldness or paleness of the leg or arm
- Problems moving your toes or fingers
- Sharp pain or stinging at the site
- Fever or chills
- Numbness or weakness
- Confusion or you are less alert

If you have bleeding that will not stop or a lump that gets bigger at the site, **lie flat, hold pressure on the site and call 911.**

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.