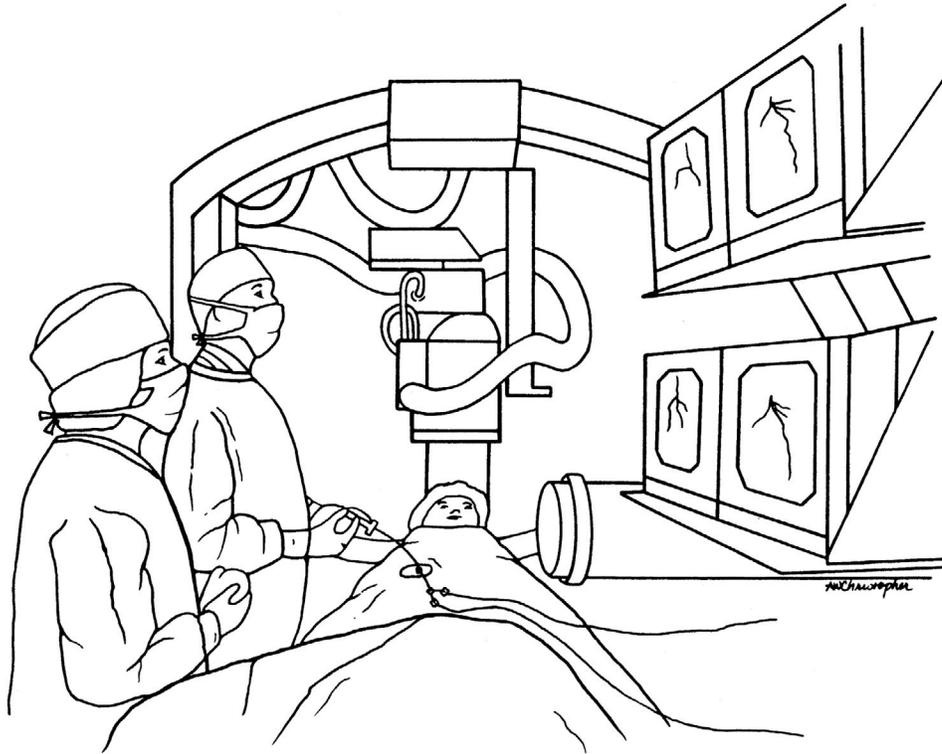


Heart Cath and Heart Angioplasty



A **heart cath** is also called cardiac catheterization, cardiac cath or coronary angiogram. A heart cath shows blood vessels of the heart and the inside of the heart as it pumps. A tube called a **catheter** is put into a blood vessel in the top of your leg in your groin or in your arm. It is then guided into your heart. Dye is put in through the catheter and x-rays are taken.

Narrowed blood vessels can lead to chest pain or a heart attack. A **heart angioplasty**, also called a PTCA (Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty) or balloon angioplasty, may be done with a heart cath if you have narrowed blood vessels in the heart. 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 stent, which is a small, wire tube-like device, may be placed to keep the blood vessel open.

Arrive on time for your procedure. You may need to stay overnight in the hospital. Plan to have an adult family member or friend take you home.

To Prepare

- Your doctor may order some tests such as a chest x-ray, EKG and blood tests.
- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, after midnight before your procedure.
- Ask your doctor if you should take your medicines the morning of the procedure. If so, take with sips of water only.
- Tell the staff if you have allergies, have asthma or are taking the medicine metformin (Glucophage).

During Your Procedure

- You will wear a hospital gown and lie on a table. You may wear your hearing aids, dentures and glasses. Remove nail polish and contact lenses.
- The lights in the room may be dim and the room may seem cool.
- You will be awake so you can tell the staff how you feel.
- An IV (intravenous) is put into a vein in your arm. Medicine to help you relax and fluids are given through your IV.
- The catheter site, either your groin or your arm, is cleaned. Your groin may be shaved if used.
- Small pads are put on your chest to check your heart. For men, chest hair may need to be shaved.
- A blood pressure cuff is put on your arm. Your blood pressure and heart rate are checked often.
- The doctor numbs the catheter site. This stings for a few seconds. After this, you should only feel pressure and no pain.
- The catheter is put into a large blood vessel and threads it into your heart.
- It is common to feel skipped heartbeats or fluttering. Tell your doctor, but do not be scared.
- 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, cough, take deep breaths or move your arms.
- 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 made bigger and smaller a few times to 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 is given again to see how much the blood vessel has been opened.
- The catheter is then removed.
- The needle placed in the catheter site may stay in place for several hours.
- When the needle is removed, the blood vessel is closed. The staff will hold pressure on the site for 10 to 20 minutes, so it does not bleed. A stitch, clip or plug may be used to close the site. A clamp may be put on the area for about 1 hour to stop bleeding. A bandage is put over the site after the clamp is removed.

After Your Procedure

In the Hospital

- Your site, pulse and blood pressure will be checked often.
- Your leg or arm needs to be kept straight for 2 to 6 hours to prevent bleeding.
- 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 may drink clear liquids until the needle is removed. After that you may return to your normal diet.
- You may have oxygen and a heart monitor in place for a few hours.
- An EKG or blood tests may be done.
- It is common for your catheter site to be tender and bruised.
- Your doctor will talk to you about your procedure.
- Medicines given during the procedure will make you sleepy. You will need to have an adult family member or friend take you home for your safety.

At Home

- Rest for 24 hours.
- Drink at least eight glasses of liquids today to help your body get rid of the dye.
- Remove the pressure bandage at bedtime and put on a clean band-aid.
- Do not take a tub bath for one week after your procedure. You can take a shower. Do not scrub the site.
- Remove the band-aid over the site when you shower.
- You can leave the site uncovered or put a clean band-aid on it.
- Check the site each day for increased redness, bruising or swelling.
- Do not take the medicine metformin (Glucophage) for two days after the procedure.
- Do not drive for 2 to 3 days.
- Do not exercise, run or lift objects over 10 pounds for three days.
- Talk to your doctor or nurse about other activity limits. You should be able to return to normal activities in about one week.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Bleeding at the site that will not stop
- Sharp pain or stinging at the site
- Swelling, redness, more bruising, tenderness, warmth or drainage at the site
- Coldness or paleness of the foot or hand
- Problems moving your toes or fingers
- Numbness or weakness
- Fever or chills
- 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 the staff if you have any questions or concerns.