



## Welcome Sheet

# Having an Angiogram (Arteriogram)

## What is an Angiogram?

An angiogram is a study of selected blood vessels using x-ray technology. Most often, angiograms are done to study arteries, the blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart. Angiography is performed by a doctor called an Interventional Radiologist (IR) in the Department of Radiology. During this test, the IR uses a very small needle, a catheter (a floppy tube the width of a piece of spaghetti), and highly specialized x-ray equipment to take very detailed “pictures” of selected blood vessels. IRs, surgeons, and other specialists use these “pictures” to guide them when they treat a blockage or narrowing that is decreasing the flow of blood to an important part of the body, like your kidneys. Other areas of study include your arms, legs, liver, head, and neck.

**Note:** Anticoagulants (blood-thinning medications) must be stopped at least 3-4 days before your scheduled angiogram (arteriogram). Examples are Vitamin E and Coumadin (Warfarin). In addition, Diabetes medications: Glucophage (Metformin) or Glucovance (Glyburide and Metformin) must be stopped 24 hours BEFORE the procedure and re-started 48 hours AFTER the procedure. Please be sure to consult your doctor if you take any of these medications.

## What Can I Expect Before the Procedure?

- **Nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before your Angiogram** – including coffee, water, Lifesavers<sup>®</sup>, and chewing gum, unless otherwise indicated by your surgeon/primary doctor. If you have had something to eat or drink, please tell your doctor. However, you MAY continue to take your routine medications, such as heart and blood pressure medications, with only a sip of water.
- Bring a list of any medications you are taking and your insurance information. You may have blood tests taken if needed.
- An IV (intravenous line) will be placed in your arm. The IV is needed to give you medications during your procedure to help you relax and make sure that you are comfortable.
- In Radiology, the Interventional Radiologist explains the procedure and asks you to sign a consent form stating that you understand the procedure you are having. This is a good time to ask questions and to share any concerns you may have.

## What Can I Expect During the Procedure?

- During the angiogram, you will be placed on monitors that measure your blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen level.
- Next, the IR will: a) inject a small amount of local anesthetic around either the femoral (groin) or brachial (arm) artery, b) insert a small plastic tube into this area, and c) position the tip of the tube in the vessel supplying blood to the area being studied. A liquid, or contrast, is injected through the tube and makes the vessel visible. After the injection, you may feel a warm flush as the contrast travels through your system. This feeling always passes quickly. **Please be sure to let the staff know if you have had a previous allergic reaction to the x-ray contrast.**
- Then, the IR will take x-ray pictures that will record obstructions and narrowings of the arteries under examination. **It is very important to hold still while the x-ray pictures are being taken.** The final results of your test will be given to you by your primary doctor or surgeon later that day or in a follow-up office visit.

**Note:** If you have an Angioplasty or Stent placement during your arteriogram, there is a possibility that you may be admitted to the hospital following your procedure.

## What Can I Expect After The Procedure?

Once the procedure is completed, the radiologist removes the catheter and applies pressure to the catheter entry site for 15-20 minutes to prevent bleeding.

- **Your nurse will ask you to lie still without bending your leg for 2-4 hours after the procedure.**
- Your nurse will monitor your pulse, blood pressure, and check your arteriogram puncture site for any bleeding or bruising.
- You may eat as soon as you feel up to it.

Before you go home, you will receive specific instructions about your care at home from your doctor and the nursing staff. It is very important to drink fluids at home in order to flush the contrast from your body.

**YOU MAY NOT DRIVE OR TAKE A CAB HOME ALONE.** You may take a cab ONLY if you are accompanied by a responsible adult.

## More Ways to Learn

- To learn more about Interventional Radiology, go to: [www.sirweb.org](http://www.sirweb.org) and click on 'Patients and Public'.
- To learn more about Angiography, go to: [www.sirweb.org](http://www.sirweb.org) and click on 'Patients and Public' and then click on 'Angiography' listed under IR Treatments.

### Notes & Questions to Ask My Doctor

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### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question: What is an angiogram?**

Answer: An angiogram is a study of selected blood vessels using x-ray technology. Most often, angiograms are done to study arteries, the blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart.

**Question: After your angiogram, how many hours will you need to remain still, without bending your leg?**

Answer: Your nurse will ask you to lie still without bending your leg for 2-4 hours after the angiogram procedure.

**Question: Can I drive myself home after an angiogram?**

Answer: No, you cannot drive yourself home after an angiogram procedure.

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Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).