

How To Prepare For Your Arteriogram

Department of Radiology

General information

An arteriogram, or angiogram, is a series of X-ray pictures of the arteries taken after an injection of “contrast” material (X-ray dye) into an artery or vein, making these blood vessels visible. All parts of the vascular system can be studied by angiography including arteries to the legs, kidneys, liver and neck. After contrast is injected into an artery, a radiologist can look for any unusual narrowings, blockages, aneurysms (ballooning) or other weaknesses in the vessel wall. The angiogram provides a “roadmap” of your vascular system which helps in the diagnosis and treatment of your medical condition.

Preparing for an arteriogram

- Do not eat anything after midnight on the day of the test.
- Take all your medications with small sips of water, unless your doctor tells you not to. Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.
- Inform the radiologist of any allergies you have.
- On the morning of your arteriogram please come to the third floor Radiology reception desk.
- A responsible adult must drive you home.
- The radiologist will explain and discuss the procedure with you and have you sign a consent form. If you have any questions about the procedure you may call the Radiology office at 415- 353-1300.

How is the procedure performed?

Once you arrive in the Radiology Department, you will be escorted either into a preparation room or directly into the angiography room. There, an intravenous (IV) line will be placed in your arm. This allows us to give fluids and medications to you during the procedure. Once in the angiography room, your groin area will be shaved and cleaned with a sterile solution which helps to prevent infection. You will then be covered by sterile gowns and drapes. A local anesthetic will be injected at the skin site. A thin catheter (tube) will then be placed into the artery through your groin and directed with x-ray guidance, to the area of the body which must be studied. You may be able to feel the radiologist working with the catheter at the entry site.

As the contrast material is injected, you may feel a sensation of warmth in the area being examined. This feeling should pass quickly. You may be asked to hold your breath for 10-15 seconds. Several injections may be necessary.

How long will the procedure and recovery take?

The entire angiography procedure takes approximately 1-1/2 hours. After the exam is completed, the catheter will be removed and the radiologist will apply pressure to the entry site with his/her hand for 10-15 minutes. This will help to prevent bruising and bleeding and allow the entry site to heal.

You will be on bed rest for six hours with your head down and leg straight. Your pulse, blood pressure and entry site will be checked frequently during this period. You may eat and drink.

After the recovery period you will be assisted to stand up, and will be observed an additional 15-30 minutes to assure that there is no leakage from the puncture site. If your study has been done on an "outpatient" basis, you may then be driven home by your companion.

When will I know the results?

If the procedure is extensive or complicated, it may take some time to receive all the films and review them. When the radiologist has reviewed the films, he/she will go over the results with your physician who will then discuss them with you. Unlike other radiologic exams, the radiologist may be directly involved in the treatment of your condition by using a technique such as balloon angioplasty. In this situation, the radiologist will confer with your doctor and then discuss the results or treatment options with you.

Outpatient discharge instructions

- Drink eight (8) glasses of liquids such as water, juice or soda once you have returned home. You may begin your usual diet when you leave the hospital.
- Avoid strenuous activity such as housework and heavy yardwork for 48 hours.
- Do not drive a car for 24 hours.
- Do not take a hot bath for 5 days. You may shower.

Notify the Interventional Radiology office if any of the following occurs:

- Bleeding at the entry site.
- Any unusual pain in the entry site or the leg in which the catheter was placed.
- Any change in color or temperature of the leg. (A small bruise may be a normal occurrence.)

If any of these signs occur or if you have any questions following the procedure, call 415-353-1300
An interventional radiologist will contact you.