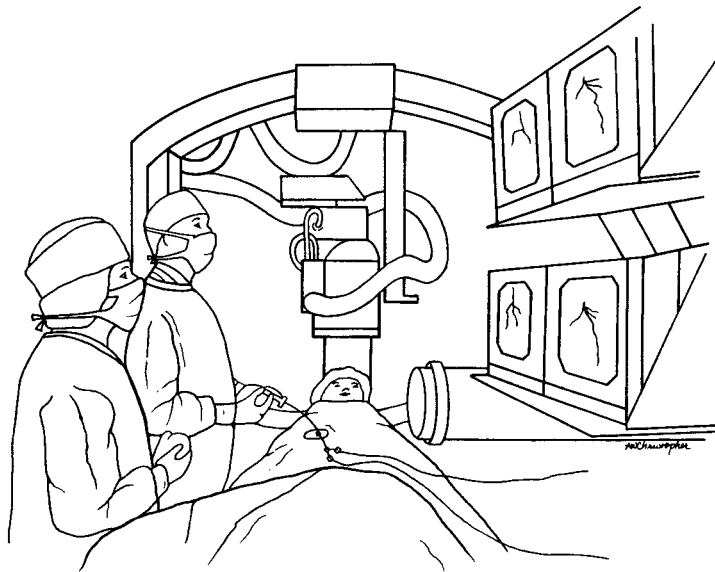


Heart Cath



This test is also called a cardiac catherization 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 vein at 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.

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

An adult family member or friend needs to come with you 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.

To Prepare

- Do not eat or drink anything, including water, 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 the staff if you have allergies, have asthma, or are taking the medicine Glucophage.

During the Test

- You will wear a hospital gown.
- You may wear your hearing aids, dentures, and glasses. Remove nail polish and contact lenses.
- You lie on a table.
- An IV (intravenous) is put in a vein in your arm. Medicine may be given through the IV to help you relax.
- The catheter site, either your groin or your arm, is cleaned. Your groin is 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 during the test.
- The doctor numbs your catheter site. This stings for a few seconds. After this, you should only feel pressure and no pain.
- The lights are turned down so the doctor can see the screen.
- The catheter is put into your blood vessel and threaded into your heart.
- As the catheter passes into your heart, you may feel skipped heartbeats or fluttering. Tell your doctor, but do not be scared. This is common.
- 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.
- Tell the staff if you feel any pain during the test.
- When the test is done, the catheter is removed. Pressure is put on the site for 10-20 minutes so it does not bleed. A stitch or plug may be used to close the site. A clamp is put on for about 1 hour to stop bleeding. A bandage is put over the site after the clamp is removed.

After the Test

- You will be taken to another bed. You will rest for about 4 hours.
- Staff will check you often.
- Keep your leg or arm straight 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 can eat and drink.
- Medicines given during the test will make you sleepy. You will need to have an adult family member or friend take you home for your safety.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

Your Care at Home

Today

- Rest at home.
- 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 bandage at bedtime and put on a clean band-aid.
- Keep the site dry. Do not shower or bathe.

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 2-3 days.
- Do not exercise, run, or lift objects over 10 pounds or 4.5 kilograms for 3 days after the test.

Call your doctor **right away** if you have:

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

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.