

## INFORMATION FOR YOUR CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

### WHAT IS CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION?

Cardiac catheterization is a procedure in which a small catheter is placed into an artery in your leg or arm. This catheter is then threaded back through the arterial system all the way to the arteries in the heart. During angiography, the physician will inject dye through the catheter and use X-rays to produce an image of the heart's blood vessels. This will help your physician look at the function of your heart to see if there are any blockages in the blood vessels around your heart. You may be given some medication to help you relax, but you will be awake during the procedure. The procedure lasts about one hour, then you will go back to your room to recover and be discharged later that day.

### PREPARING FOR YOUR CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION

- Two or three days prior to the cardiac catheterization, you will need to have the following labs drawn: basic metabolic panel (BMP), complete blood count (CBC), prothrombin time and international normalized ratio (PT/INR), and partial thromboplastin time (PTT). You will also need a urinalysis. Within two weeks of the procedure, you will need an EKG, and within one month of the procedure, you will need a chest X-ray.
- A recent office note, within two weeks, needs to be sent to the hospital prior to the start of the procedure.
- If you are on Coumadin®, you need to stop taking your Coumadin or warfarin three to five days prior to the procedure. The medication will be restarted after the procedure.
- You will need to be at the hospital 2½ hours before the start of the procedure.
- You need to let the physician know if you have any of the following conditions:
  1. Allergy to iodine, dye or shellfish
  2. Pregnancy
  3. Allergy to latex
  4. Diabetes
- Do not eat or drink anything for eight hours prior to the procedure.
- Take your medications as directed with small sips of water, except for a medication called Lasix or furosemide. Do not take this prior to your procedure. You can take this medication after the test is over.
- If you are a diabetic, take half of your normal dose of insulin. If you take pills to control your blood sugar, do not take your medication until after the test.
- Bring your current medications with you to the hospital.
- A nurse from the hospital will call a day or two prior to your procedure to obtain information about your health history and any medications you take and to answer any questions you may have.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION?

- Before the procedure, you will be given an explanation of the test and then asked to sign a consent form.
- A nurse will insert an intravenous catheter into your hand or arm.
- You will be taken to the cardiac catheterization lab.
- In the cardiac catheterization lab, you will be placed on a table, and electrodes will be placed on your chest and connected to a monitor, which will continuously monitor your heart rhythm. Also, your blood pressure and oxygen levels will be monitored continuously.
- You may be given a sedative to help you relax during the procedure, but you will be awake. This is important so you can report any chest pain or symptoms to the physician.
- The site on the leg or arm where the catheters will be inserted is cleaned and any hair around the insertion site is shaved. The insertion point is numbed with local anesthetic, and the physician makes a tiny incision in the skin to access the artery.
- Once the incision has been made, a guide wire is inserted via a needle into the artery. A catheter sheath or short hollow tube is then guided over the wire. When the catheters are inserted, most people feel only slight pressure or a sensation of mild tugging, but because there are no nerve endings inside the arteries, you can not feel the catheters moving through the body. With the use of fluoroscopy or X-ray, the physician guides the catheters through the arterial system to the area of the heart that is being studied.
- As the catheter is positioned in one of the three main coronary arteries or the blood vessels that feed the heart, dye is injected through the catheter, giving the physician a picture of that coronary artery. The physician will be able to tell if there are blockages in that artery.
- During the injection of the dye, you may feel a warm, flushing sensation for about 20 to 30 seconds; this is normal.
- When the procedure is completed, the catheter is removed through the sheath at the insertion site. When the sheath is removed, pressure may be held for 15 to 30 minutes to prevent bleeding, a cork-like device may be inserted into the wound to seal the area, or a stitching device with sutures will close the incision and eventually dissolve.
- The test takes approximately one hour.
- After the test, you will go back to your room and remain there for at least two hours before you can be discharged.
- The area that was used for the insertion of the catheter will be watched for bleeding. You will have to remain in bed for at least one hour after you get back to your room.

## POST-PROCEDURE INSTRUCTIONS

- You will need someone to drive you home after the procedure.
- You will receive discharge instructions by the nurse before you go home.

## WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULTS OF MY CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION?

- The final interpretation of the test results will be completed by the cardiologist.
- The cardiologist will speak with you before you are discharged from the hospital with your test results.
- The physician ordering your test and family doctor will receive a report of the test.