

Arteriogram Procedure and Home Care

Thank you for choosing Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns or do not understand the information. Always ask us to explain words or phrases you do not understand.

This information will describe what to expect before, during and after your arteriogram.

What is an arteriogram?

An arteriogram is an x-ray of your blood vessels. It is done to see how well the blood moves through the vessels of your brain, lungs, abdomen, arms, or legs.

A specially trained doctor will do this exam. The doctor will put a small tube (catheter) into a blood vessel in your groin or arm. Then, the doctor will inject x-ray dye (contrast) so the vessels can be seen better on x-ray.

Why do I need an arteriogram?

You need an arteriogram because your doctor suspects there is poor blood flow in one or more of your blood vessels. This x-ray gives information that will help you and your doctor plan a treatment for you.

How do I get ready for my arteriogram?

If you are not a patient in the hospital, you will be admitted to the Day Hospital either the day before or the morning of your test. You must not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the exam. You may have a small amount of water or another clear liquid with your medicines.

Before your exam, your doctor will visit you to explain the procedure. At that time, you should ask questions you might have about this exam.

If you have allergies, problems with medicines, or think you might be pregnant, tell your doctor. If you are allergic to x-ray dye, iodine, or shellfish, you must let your doctor know as soon as you can.



We will ask you to sign a consent form giving the doctor permission to do the arteriogram.

Everyone having an arteriogram will have blood tests before the procedure, unless you have had recent blood work that was normal.

Someone will shave your groin on one or both sides. Sometimes we may shave your arm. You need to remove your jewelry and dentures. You should take a shower, wash with an antiseptic soap, and put on a hospital gown. Avoid applying oils, lotions, or perfumes the day of your test. It is a good idea to go to the bathroom before you leave your room.

Depending on who your doctor is, staff will take you to the Interventional Room either in the operating room or in radiology (x-ray). While the exam is being done, your family can wait in your room or in one of the hospital's waiting rooms.

What happens in the interventional room?

You will see lots of special equipment. The staff will help you onto the x-ray table and will check your heart rhythm and blood pressure. If you do not have an IV (needle in a vein), the nurse will start one to give you fluids and medicines during the exam.

How long does it take?

The time will vary, but most likely it will take about two hours. It will be longer if the doctor does an angioplasty (balloon procedure) to open a vessel. Sometimes the doctor will insert a stent (tube) to keep the blood vessel open. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information if you have been told you might have an angioplasty or stent.

What steps are involved in an arteriogram?

An arteriogram involves three major steps:

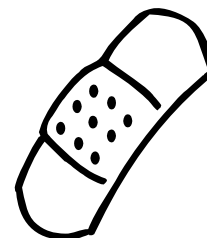
- Insert a small tube (catheter) into your groin or arm
- Take x-ray pictures while x-ray dye (contrast) is injected into the vessel
- Remove the catheter

Insert the catheter: The staff will use antiseptic liquid to clean your skin where the catheter will be inserted. Most often, this is at the top of the leg (groin) or the upper arm. Then, you will be covered with a sterile sheet.

Next, the doctor will use a small needle to numb your skin where he will insert the catheter. The nurse will put medicine in your IV to relieve pain and to help you relax. You may feel pressure or brief discomfort as the catheter goes through your skin. The doctor will guide the catheter through the blood vessel while watching it on a TV-like screen. You will not feel the catheter moving through your blood vessels.

Take x-ray pictures: When the catheter is in place, the doctor will push contrast (x-ray dye) through the catheter and take x-ray pictures. You may feel hot inside (flushed) when the contrast is injected but the feeling only lasts a few seconds. The doctors may need to put contrast into the blood vessel and take x-ray pictures a few times.

Remove the catheter: When the arteriogram is completed, the doctor will remove the catheter. He or she will put pressure over the catheter site for 10 to 15 minutes to prevent bleeding. A nurse will put a small bandage (dressing) on the catheter site which often is removed by the next day. Your doctor will explain the results of your exam.



What do I do after my arteriogram?

When you return to your room, you need to stay in bed with your leg or arm straight for 4 to 8 hours. The staff will check your blood pressure, groin, and the pulses in your feet often.

Call the nurse if you have swelling, tingling, or pain or if you feel something wet at the catheter site. A nurse or nursing assistant can help you with a bedpan or urinal while you stay in bed.

You may eat after the exam. It is best to drink plenty of fluids.

If you cough, sneeze, or laugh, put your fingers on the catheter site and apply pressure.

What do I do after I go home?

- Do not stay alone the first day or two at home. There may be a chance of bleeding.
- If you notice severe bleeding, a gush of blood, or rapid swelling, call 911 or your local emergency number. While waiting, have someone press hard on the artery for 20 minutes.
- Take your routine medicines unless you were told not to do so.
- In the next 48 hours do not lift, push, or move objects weighing over 10 pounds. This may put extra pressure on the catheter site and cause it to bleed.
- Do not do heavy physical activity for the next 48 hours. Slow-paced walking is okay.
- Drink 8 ounces of liquid every 2 hours while awake for the next 2 days, unless your doctor tells you not to do so. Fluids help flush the dye out of your body.
- After the first day, you may remove the bandage if it has not been removed.
- You may shower 12 hours after the exam. Pat the wound dry and put on a clean, dry bandage like a Band-Aid[®].
- Do not bathe in a tub until the wound heals.

- Do not drive for the next 2 days.
- It is normal to have slight discomfort at the catheter site. It will go away slowly as your wound heals.
- You may see some bruises at the catheter site. As the bruise heals, it may move down your leg or arm.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor if you have:

- Fever of 101 degrees F or greater
- Swelling, redness, or increased tenderness at the catheter site
- Cramping, swelling, increased coolness to legs, feet, arms, or hands



Phone Numbers

Interventional Radiology:
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.: (336) 716-4937 or (336) 716 -4936

Outside office hours or on weekends and holidays, please call (336) 716-2011
and ask for the doctor on-call for Interventional Radiology or for
the doctor on-call for Dr. _____.

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