

What is an Angiogram with Angioplasty?

Angiograms (arteriograms) are specialized X-ray studies that are frequently done to check for blockages or narrowing in your blood vessels. Sometimes it is possible to treat a blockage found within an artery during an angiogram.

Angioplasty is a specialized procedure done to treat blockages in your blood vessels without having to perform surgery. Angioplasty may be performed by the Interventional Radiologist (IR) at the time of your angiogram. **During the angioplasty**, the IR inserts a small balloon that is attached to a thin tube (catheter) into a blood vessel. The tube or catheter is placed through a small nick (incision) in the skin and guided into your blood vessel using X-rays. Once the catheter has reached the site of the blockage or narrowing, the balloon is inflated, and then removed, leaving the blood vessel open.

Special Note:

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

What Can I Expect While at California Pacific Medical Center?

- Please call us at (415) 600-2500 to speak with an admitting representative as soon as your procedure is scheduled. The admitting staff works to help you complete any necessary registration forms and insurance information by phone.
- **You may not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your procedure, unless otherwise directed by your doctor.** However, you MAY continue to take your routine medications, such as heart and blood pressure medications, with only a sip of water.

What Can I Expect While at California Pacific Medical Center?

(continued)

- On the day of your scheduled angiogram with angioplasty procedure, come to the Ambulatory Care Unit, located at 2351 Clay Street, 6th Floor, at least 2 hours before your scheduled procedure.

Note: Non-English speaking patients are encouraged to come with an English speaking family member or translator.

- Parking is available at 2405 Clay Street (cross street is Webster Street).
- 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 (IR) will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form stating that you understand the procedure you are having. This is a good time for you to ask questions and to share any concerns you may have.

During the Procedure

- During the procedure, you will be placed on monitors that measure your blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen level.
- Next, the IR will: 1) inject a small amount of local anesthetic around either the femoral (groin) or brachial (arm) artery, 2) insert a small plastic tube into this area, and 3) 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 narrowing of the arteries under examination. **It is very important to hold still while the X-ray pictures are being taken.**

During the Procedure *(continued)*

- Once the narrowing has been identified and measured, a new catheter is placed with a balloon on its tip. This balloon is inflated, and then removed, leaving the blood vessel open.
- In some cases, the narrowing cannot be opened by the balloon alone. If this occurs, a small metal stent (mesh tube) may be inserted and expanded to keep the narrowed blood vessel open.
- The final results of your test will be given to you by your primary doctor or surgeon later that day or the day following your procedure.

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. You will either return to the ACU on a gurney or be admitted into the hospital. **There, your nurse will:**

- **ask you to lie still without bending your leg for 2 – 4 hours after the procedure.**
- monitor your pulse and blood pressure and will 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

- Visit the Society of Interventional Radiology Web site at www.sirweb.org, click on "Patients & Public," scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on "Angiography."
- Contact the Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at California Pacific Medical Center by calling (415) 600-3361.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: An angiogram (arteriogram) is a test that uses specialized X-ray studies to check for blockages in your blood vessels.

True or false?

Answer: True

Question: An angioplasty procedure is done to treat blockages in your blood vessels without having to perform surgery. True or false?

Answer: True

Question: Can I drive myself home after the angioplasty procedure?

Answer: No, you may not drive yourself home after the 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).