

# Angiogram

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## What is an angiogram?

An angiogram is an x-ray picture of the arteries supplying different parts of the body. X-ray contrast (an iodine-containing substance) is injected through a thin plastic tube (catheter) to outline the arteries. Common areas for an angiogram are legs, kidneys, head and heart.

## Preparation

You will stay in hospital overnight or for at least 3 hours in the Short Stay Unit or Radiology Department. You should take your usual blood thinning medications eg. Aspirin, Warfarin beforehand. As the x-ray contrast is cleared away by the kidneys please continue to drink plenty of fluid before and after the angiogram. If you have diabetes and are on insulin treatment, please ring us to arrange the best time and treatment before the study.

### OUTPATIENT

Fast for 4 hours prior to your appointment. Take any blood thinning medication, eg Aspirin, Warfarin you are on as usual, but only with a small amount of water.

Our staff will tell you what time you are to come to Radiology.

## Procedure

The procedure is performed through the artery, most commonly in the groin, under local anaesthetic. It is performed under sterile conditions with all members of the team dressed in sterile theatre gowns. The initial local anaesthetic injection stings a little, but after that there should be minimal discomfort.

Once the area is numb, a small plastic tube (catheter) is placed in the artery. Contrast dye, which can be seen under x-ray, is injected through the catheter into the arteries and a series of pictures is taken. This produces a warm feeling which only lasts for a few seconds. At this stage you will be asked to keep still.

The x-ray machine will move around your body (but will not touch you) to view the arteries from a number of different positions to identify any arteries that are narrowed or blocked.

At the conclusion of the procedure, the catheter is removed. Pressure is applied to the groin artery to allow it to seal. This takes about 10-20 minutes.

## What side effects can occur?

There is usually a bruise at the needle site. Sometimes this can be a large (like an egg) haematoma, especially if you are on blood thinning agents. This takes several days to resolve. Damage to the artery is extremely unlikely, but can occur. Reactions including rash, hives, or asthma are extremely rare for artery studies. If you have kidney problems or diabetes, drinking plenty of fluid will help clear the x-ray contrast and protect the kidneys. Specific problems will be addressed by the radiologist prior to the examination.

## How long will the procedure take?

You should allow approximately 4 hours in total (including observation time). The procedure itself will take from 30-60 minutes. In addition the artery will need 15-20 minutes to seal, and 2-3 hours is required for further healing.

Can the arteries be studied another way?

Yes, but your doctor will refer you for the best test for your problem. Colourflow (Doppler) ultrasound, CT scanning with new fast scan techniques and rapid x-ray contrast injection, or Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) angiograms with no injections are alternatives.

## What to do after the procedure

After the procedure, you will be required to stay for observation. You will be required to lie flat for the first two hours. However, you will be able to get up and walk around later that day.

Following the observation period, you will need to arrange for someone to drive you home.

In addition, you should also arrange for someone to be with you until the next morning after the radiology procedure.

**Please bring any previous x-rays with you on the day of your examination.**