

What is Angiography or Arteriography?

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Angiography, or arteriography, is an x-ray examination of the arteries, which are blood vessels. To make the arteries visible on x-ray, a type of dye called “contrast” is injected. A small, sterile flexible tube called a catheter is inserted into the arterial system, usually in the region of the groin, where the artery is close to the skin and can be compressed when necessary against the hip behind it. Sometimes other areas such as the arm are used. Contrast is then injected into the blood vessels and x-ray images are obtained.

How do I prepare for an angiography exam?

- Certain medications may need to be stopped prior to the day of the procedure, so it is important to review with your doctor all of the medications you are currently taking. You will receive special orders from your doctor, but in general:
 - Glucophage is withheld the day of the procedure and stopped for 2 days **after** the procedure.
 - Aspirin containing products are stopped at least 5 days **prior** to the procedure.
 - Blood-thinning medications (such as Coumadin and Lovenox) are stopped 3 days **prior** to the procedure.

- For female patients, if there is any possibility that you may be pregnant, it is important to let the technologist know this prior to the procedure.
- You will not be allowed to eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before the procedure.
- On the day of the exam, an interventional radiologist, specially trained to perform this procedure, will explain the procedure to you. At this time, you will also be asked to sign a consent form.
- Just before the procedure, the technologist will shave the area of your body where the catheter is to be inserted.
- **It is important to let the technologist know if you have had past allergic reactions to contrast media.**

How is the angiography or arteriography performed?

- You will be given medication to help you to relax.
- The radiologist will cleanse the area where the catheter is to be inserted with an antiseptic.
- Sterile drapes will be positioned over you, leaving an opening at the area where the catheter is to be inserted.

- The doctor will inject the area with a local anesthetic (numbing medication) called Xylocaine.
- After the area is completely numb, the radiologist will insert a needle and a very thin guide wire that is used to guide the catheter into your blood vessel. A special x-ray machine called a fluoroscope will also be used to help the radiologist see the catheter and guide wire.
- Once the catheter is in the right position, the guide wire is removed.
- Rapid films will be taken while the contrast media is injected into your blood stream. The radiologist may need to take several sets of films to insure a proper study is completed of all vessels involved.
- You will be asked to hold perfectly still while the images are taken.

Are there any special follow-up procedures after the angiography/arteriography?

At the end of the procedure, the radiologist will remove the catheter and apply pressure to the injection site for at least ten minutes. If you are having the angiography done as an outpatient, you will need to have someone available to drive you home.

Is angiography safe?

- The doctor may restrict your activity that evening to decrease the chance of any bleeding at the catheter insertion site.
- For female patients, **if there is any possibility you may be pregnant or breast feeding, it is important to tell this to the technologist before the procedure.**
- If you are a diabetic and taking the medication **Glucophage, you should not take this medication for two days after the procedure** because it interacts with the contrast media. It is important to discuss this with the doctor who normally prescribes your diabetic medication.

Speak with the x-ray technologist or your nurse if you have questions or concerns regarding your angiography exam. Your doctor who ordered the exam will speak with you regarding the results.

Reference American College of Radiology. Retrieved 04/2007 from www.radiologyinfo.org

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