

*Patient Education Sheet*

## What is a Coronary Angioplasty or Stent?

(Note: to be used in conjunction with the Cardiac Catheterization Patient Education Sheet)

### What is a Coronary Angioplasty and why is this test ordered?

A coronary angioplasty (an-jee-o-plas-tee) is a procedure where a tiny balloon or stent is used to widen or open an artery that feeds the heart. This has been ordered if you have signs or symptoms of coronary artery disease (CAD). This condition involves narrowing of the blood vessels that feed the heart. Angioplasty can restore normal blood flow to the heart muscle. Your physician may also refer to the angioplasty procedure as a "PCI" or percutaneous (per-q-tan-e-us) coronary intervention.

Risk factors for Heart Disease or CAD:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Family history of heart disease

CAD starts when the lining of a coronary artery is damaged. This is often due to plaque (a fatty material composed of cholesterol and other particles). A buildup of plaque can narrow the space inside the artery, which results in a narrowed channel for blood flow to the heart muscle.

### How long will this test take?

An angioplasty will typically take about one hour. In more complex cases, the procedure may last several hours. Additional time is required for pre-procedure set up and post procedure care.

### Is there any special preparation prior to the procedure?

- ✓ (Please refer to the Patient Education Sheet for Cardiac Catheterization.) Lab work may be ordered. Diabetic medication and blood thinner dosages should be discussed with your cardiologist prior to your angioplasty.
- ✓ Do not eat or drink at least 6 hours before the procedure. Take all of your regular medications before your angioplasty **unless** directed otherwise by your doctor.
- ✓ Bring a current list of your medications with you. Wear comfortable clothing and leave jewelry, cash, checkbook, credit cards and other valuables at home.
- ✓ **All angioplasty/stent patients will spend the night following their procedure in the hospital. Have someone drive you home from the hospital.**

### What can I expect on the day of the procedure?

- Please refer to the Patient Education sheet for Cardiac Catheterization. The Patient Care Area and catheterization lab set up are the same for both procedures.
- As with a cardiac catheterization, catheters will be placed through the introducer sheath and threaded to arteries that feed the heart. You will not feel the passage of these catheters. You may feel a sensation of pressure at the sheath insertion site.
- Several arteriograms, or pictures may be taken of each artery. You will see the camera move around you during the procedure.

- Once the blockage has been located, a catheter with a small balloon at the tip is guided to the point of narrowing in the coronary artery. When the balloon catheter is positioned at the location of the blockage, it is slowly inflated to widen that artery and compress the blockage into the artery wall and stretch the artery open.
- Often, but not always, a stent is inserted into the artery with a different balloon tipped catheter. When the stent is correctly positioned in the coronary artery, the balloon is inflated to expand the stent against the walls of the coronary artery. The balloon catheter is then deflated and removed, leaving the stent permanently affixed to the wall of the coronary artery.
- Stents are made of metal in a mesh form. They come in different sizes, and are either “bare metal” or coated with a medication (drug-eluting).
- Some patients have slight discomfort during the balloon expansion phase; some patients experience their typical angina, and some patients have no discomfort at all. As with cardiac catheterization, light sedation and medications to control pain are used during the procedure.
- At the end of the procedure, the catheters and balloons are removed. Some patients receive a closure device to seal the insertion site; some patients require manual compression, or pressure at the site after the sheath is pulled. The closure method is determined by the patient’s anatomy and the Doctor’s decision on follow up care.
- You will then be moved to the Patient Care Area.

## **What should I expect after my procedure?**

After your angioplasty, your doctor will go over the results with you. You will remain on bedrest for 2-6 hours, during which time you will be moved to an inpatient care area and spend the night. The nurses caring for you will review post procedure care with you and give you a signed copy of directions to follow upon discharge.

You may receive new prescription medications. You may fill these here in the Walgreens Pharmacy located in the Strook Building or at your local pharmacy. You will be asked to make a follow up appointment with your cardiologist within one week of discharge.

Your doctor will determine your post procedure activity level and schedule, including returning to work, driving and exercise.

Smoking cessation, nutritional counseling and cardiac rehabilitation are all programs available to our patients. Feel free to ask your doctor about any of these programs.

## **Directions to your appointment**

### **Danbury Hospital**

Follow directions to the Red parking lot. Enter the main lobby and check in. Take the Tower elevators to the 7th floor. Once off the elevator, take 2 left turns and proceed straight into the Patient Care Area.

If you have further questions, call your cardiologist or Danbury Hospital Invasive Cardiology at 739-7436.

*Sources:*

Booklet “Understanding Angioplasty and Stenting”, 2004, The StayWell Company. [www.krames.com](http://www.krames.com)  
 American Heart Association @ [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org)  
 12/2008, 3/2013

*For more information, or to learn about the specialized services and programs available please visit  
[www.westernconnecticuthealthnetwork.org](http://www.westernconnecticuthealthnetwork.org)*