

Angiogram / Angioplasty (page 1 of 4)



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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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This leaflet should be read along with advice given by your doctor or nurse.

What is an angiogram?

It is a special X-ray test that shows your arteries. This test can help the doctors diagnose a blockage or narrowing in your arteries. It is performed in the Radiology Department at Royal Bournemouth Hospital.

How is this done?

A small tube is passed into the artery at the groin under local anaesthetic and a dye is injected into your arteries so that your arteries show while X-ray pictures are taken. This test takes about one hour.

On the day of the test

You need to starve for six hours before your appointment, so please do not eat anything for six hours before the start of treatment. You can continue to drink clear fluids (water, squash black tea/coffee) up to two hours before your appointment. Starving and drinking clear fluids makes sure that you would be ready for an operation in the unlikely event that you needed emergency surgery.

Medication

If you are taking any of the following medication, please inform the Radiology Department or the Vascular Nurse Practitioner as these may need to be stopped before your appointment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication to thin your blood • Blood pressure or heart medications • Diabetes medication 	<p>Please telephone Vascular Nurse Coordinator on 01722 429210</p>
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Please bring with you all the medications you currently take when you come into hospital.

Patients who have diabetes treated with insulin

When you have a date for your procedure, please telephone the diabetes nurses on 01202 704888 Mon-Fri between 8am and 4pm with the date and time for your procedure, so that they can advise you what to do about your insulin. When you come into hospital, please bring everything you need to manage your diabetes (insulin, needles, injection device, lancets and meter with test strips).

Vascular Nurse Practitioner
Tel: 01722 429210

Blood tests

You may need to have a blood test before this procedure. In certain cases a blood form is sent with your appointment. In this case blood can be taken at your doctor's surgery, at the hospital or by the district nurse if you are housebound. If your blood test shows that your kidney function is below normal, we may arrange for you to come into hospital for intravenous fluids the night before or the morning of the procedure. We will contact you if this is the case.

What happens during the test?

On arrival: You will be admitted to the Day Surgery Unit to be prepared for the procedure. Your doctor or nurse will make sure you understand the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form.

You will be wearing a hospital gown. We do not want to introduce infection, so the doctor and nurse will 'scrub up' and wear sterile gowns and you will be covered in a sterile sheet. There will also be one or two radiographers present. Occasionally we may ask you to let students watch as part of their training.

Can I expect pain during this procedure?

The doctor will inject a local anaesthetic into the groin, which stings a little, but after that you are unlikely to feel much pain. When the contrast or dye is injected you will probably feel a warm glow and it may give you the feeling of wanting to pass water. This may cause some discomfort. Some people get cramp in the legs for a few seconds - all these side effects are quite normal.

After the test

If this procedure is carried out as a diagnostic test only, the doctor will remove the tube after the x-ray pictures have been taken and press on your groin for about 5 minutes. This is to avoid bleeding and excessive bruising. You will then need to lie flat and rest for several hours till the risk of bleeding has passed. The nurses will check your groin and foot pulses regularly.

When can I go home?

If all is well, you may be allowed home the same day, but you will need someone with transport to take you home or to accompany you in a taxi and stay with you for 24-hours after the procedure.

It is important to rest till the next day to ensure that the puncture site heals completely.

If you notice any swelling or bleeding after you get home you must press firmly at the puncture site and contact Ward 12 or 14 at Bournemouth Hospital on 01202 704765 or 01202 704764. If the bleeding is uncontrollable, you will need to call 999.

Angioplasty

What is an angioplasty?

An angioplasty is the treatment often carried out as part of the angiogram. During an angioplasty a tube with a tiny balloon is passed from the groin to a narrowed part of the artery. When the balloon is inflated this stretches the narrowed part of the artery; the balloon is then removed. It may be necessary to place a stent at the site. The catheter used for angioplasty is slightly larger than for angiogram so you may have to rest in bed a little longer to allow the puncture site to heal completely, and often have to stay in hospital overnight.

There may be some bruising around the puncture site, though serious bleeding is uncommon.

Complications

- Some bruising of the groin is to be expected – occasionally there is excessive bleeding and a very large bruise may form.
- Sometimes angioplasty does not work and you may need to discuss other treatments with your surgeon.
- In about 1 in 5 people who have had angioplasty the arteries will have narrowed again after a year and it may be necessary to repeat the angioplasty.
- There is a small risk of having to do an operation after angioplasty to remove a clot further down the leg or bypass the blockage if it is severe. Very rarely, failure of these treatments may lead to loss of the limb.
- There is a small risk of allergic reaction to the X-ray dye. The dye may also damage the kidneys.
- Occasionally, if the angioplasty has not worked your symptoms may be made worse.
- In rare circumstances, if the procedure does not go well, amputation may be the only option, but we would only do this if all other ‘salvage’ surgical procedures have failed and as a last resort.

Results of angioplasty

You will not be given the results of your test or treatment during your hospital stay. You should receive an appointment for the vascular clinic to discuss the results - usually about 4 -6 weeks after the procedure. If you had a stent, you will be invited for duplex ultrasound scan 6 weeks after the procedure and you might be given some medication changes for a while after.

In some cases it is not possible to achieve improvement in blood flow.

Sometimes people feel an instant improvement in blood flow after angioplasty, resulting in previously cold feet feeling warm, pain reduction and better walking ability.

If you have a leg ulcer, a successful angioplasty will improve the blood flow which will help heal the ulcer, though this can take some time. During the follow-up clinic appointment your ulcer will be photographed and measured.

What can I do to help ensure the angioplasty works?

If you smoke you must make serious efforts to stop.

The NHS smoking quitline is 0300 123 1044

Most GP surgeries also have smoking cessation nurses who can help and advise.

Make sure that you eat a healthy diet. As a general guide:

- avoid fried foods and animal fats
- use lean meat and include 2-3 portions of fish a week
- use skimmed milk instead of the full fat version and reduce your intake of butter and cheese
- eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day

People with vascular disease should be taking Aspirin or a similar blood thinning medication. They should also take a Statin to help lower cholesterol. This is not only to halt progression of peripheral vascular disease, but to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

When you have had a successful angioplasty it is very important that you take walking exercise. You should aim to take at least a brisk ½ hour walk every day.