Transarterial Chemoembolisation (TACE)

Radiology Service

Information for patients

What is a TACE?
A TACE is a procedure performed under x-ray guidance to treat cancer of the liver (hepatocellular carcinoma). This procedure involves using a special chemotherapy preparation to block off (embolise) specific blood vessels that may be supplying blood to the cancer in the liver.

What to Bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.)

Preparation:
You will be required to have a blood test prior to your procedure to check your kidney and liver function and blood clotting levels.

Tell staff at the time of booking and when you attend your procedure if you have any allergies, have had a previous reaction to an x-ray dye or if you have kidney disease. This ensures that the appropriate measures are taken to carry out the procedure with maximum safety.

Arrange for someone to take you home from upon discharge from hospital.

Eating/ drinking:
You will be required not to eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your procedure.

Medications:
Tell staff at the time of booking if you are taking any:

- Blood thinning medications (e.g. Warfarin, Xarelto, Rivaroxaban, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis),
- Antiplatelet medications (e.g. Clopidogrel, Plavix, Aspirin)
- Diabetic medication containing metformin.

You will be informed if you need to stop taking these medications before your procedure.

Continue taking other medications as prescribed, unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your procedure.

Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.

Procedure:
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss with you your medical history and insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your hand or arm. You will be given antibiotics and medication for pain and nausea through the cannula in your arm.

The doctor will explain the procedure and discuss with you the potential risks and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

During the procedure you will be lying on your back on a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff.
Transarterial Chemoembolisation (TACE)
Radiology Service

This procedure is performed by accessing the blood vessel in your groin called the femoral artery. Your groin will be shaved and cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin in your groin. A small incision will be made and a small needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into the femoral artery. A thin plastic tube called a sheath is then inserted into the femoral artery and the needle is removed. You may feel some slight pressure in the groin when inserting the sheath but it shouldn’t be painful. Once in place, you should not feel any pain or discomfort for the duration of the procedure.

The doctor will then use longer plastic tubes called catheters through the sheath to navigate into the blood vessels of your liver and use the contrast dye and x-ray to take images.

Once the specific blood vessels that supply the cancer are located, the doctor will inject the special chemotherapy preparation to block them off and treat the cancer.

Once completed, the catheter and sheath will be removed and pressure will be applied to the puncture site by the doctor for approximately 10-15mins to stop any bleeding which may occur. A small waterproof dressing will then be placed over the puncture site.

**Post Procedure Care:**

You will be required to **lie flat for 4 hours** post procedure to prevent any bleeding from the puncture site. You will be transferred to the recovery area where you will be monitored by the nursing staff until you are ready to return to your ward.

**Discharge**

Generally you will be required to stay overnight following your procedure.

You may require a CT scan before you can be discharged.

You will be given antibiotic tablets to take for 5 days at home upon discharge.

**Results:**

The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.

Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

**Radiation Risk**

Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

Contact information
Ph: (03) 9076 2963
Email: radiologybookings@alfred.org.au

**Radiology – the Alfred**

55 Commercial Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
T 03 9076 2000
alfredhealth.org.au

**References**

[Inside Radiology](http://www.insideradiology.com.au)

[The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists](http://www.ranrcr.org)

If you would like to provide feedback or request this information in an alternative format, contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au