**Angiogram and Angioplasty**

**Radiology Service**

**Information for patients**

**What is an angiogram?**
An angiogram is a procedure performed to examine your blood vessels. Using x-ray contrast dye and x-ray guidance, angiograms provide information about blood vessels and blood vessel abnormalities such as narrowings and blockages which can then be treated.

**What is an angioplasty?**
If you have any narrowings or blockages in your blood vessels you may require an angioplasty and/or stent. An angioplasty involves using a special balloon to widen the narrowed vessel to improve blood flow. A stent insertion involves deploying a stent into the blocked blood vessel to keep it open and unblocked. Both treatment options are usually performed at the same time as your angiogram if required.

**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 function and blood clotting levels.

At the time of booking and when you attend your procedure, tell staff 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 your procedure and stay with you overnight.

**Eating/ drinking:**
You will be required not to eat or drink for 4 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. 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 a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff. You may also be given medication to keep you comfortable and relaxed during your procedure if you require it.

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. 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 insert a longer plastic tube called a catheter through the sheath to navigate into the blood vessels to be examined. If an angioplasty is required, a thin balloon will be inserted into the narrowed or blocked blood vessel and slowly inflated to widen the blood vessel and improve blood flow.

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 after your procedure to prevent bleeding from the puncture site. You will be transferred to the day recovery unit for the duration of your recovery period where you will be monitored by nursing staff until ready to be discharged home.

**Discharge:**
Generally you will be able to go home on the same day as your procedure if you have no other medical conditions/concerns that require treatment. You will be provided with an information sheet regarding discharge instructions upon completion of your procedure.

**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.

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**References**
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The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

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