

Coronary Angiogram a Guide

Patient Information - Cardiology Diagnostic and Interventional Services

What is a Coronary Angiogram?

A coronary angiogram is a test to see if you have any narrowing of the arteries that supply the heart with blood. The results of this test are helpful in guiding your doctors to advise of further treatment. Contrast is a clear fluid that shows on x-ray. Contrast and x-rays are used to look at the heart's blood supply via an artery in the wrist or groin. The test takes around 20-30 minutes to do.

Before the test

You will be sent an appointment and some paperwork to complete and return. You will be asked to have a blood test before you come into hospital.

If you take any blood thinning (anticoagulant) medication apart from Aspirin, such as Warfarin, Dabigatran (Pradaxa), or Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) please contact the Cardiology Day Ward on phone **3641070** for instructions on when to stop these before the procedure.

If you are taking any diabetic medications please contact the Cardiology Day Ward on phone **3641070**

You will be admitted to the Cardiology Day Unit for several hours. You may eat and drink as usual up until the time of your procedure. You will be asked to wear a hospital gown and pyjama trousers. Your wrist or groin will be shaved. The test will be fully explained to you. You will then be asked to sign a consent form with your doctor. An intravenous (IV) line will be placed into a vein in your arm. Please continue to take your normal medications unless told otherwise.



Procedure room ("Cath Lab")

How is it performed?

Your test is performed in a procedure room (or Cath lab) where you will lie flat on a firm, narrow table that allows the x-ray machine to move around you. Your heart rhythm and blood pressure will be monitored throughout the test.

The wrist or groin is cleaned with an antiseptic solution and a sterile drape is then placed over you, leaving only the site exposed. Local anaesthetic is injected into the site. This can sting briefly, but after this the test does not usually cause discomfort. A sheath (short plastic tube) is placed into the artery.

A narrow hollow tube (catheter) is then advanced, through the sheath under x-ray guidance to the heart arteries. Through this catheter contrast is injected into the arteries and several x-rays are taken. Once all the x-rays have been taken, the catheter is removed.

Sedation given during procedure

In the event that you require sedation medicine for the procedure, there are recognised risks associated with certain activities afterwards. **You must have a relative or friend pick you up from the Day Ward because of the effects of the sedation medication.**

It is illegal to drive a motor vehicle while the sedation medication is in your system and you are impaired because of its effect. You should not drive a motor vehicle, operate heavy machinery, sign legal documents or make important decisions **for at least 24 hours** following your procedure.

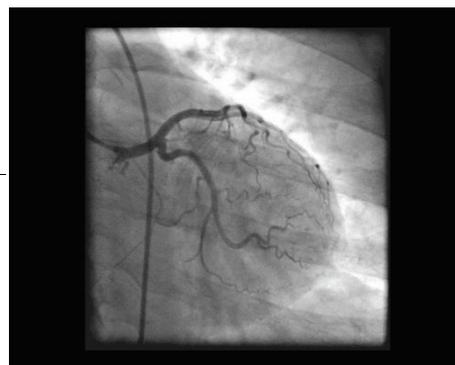
You need to have someone to take you home & remain with you overnight.

After the test

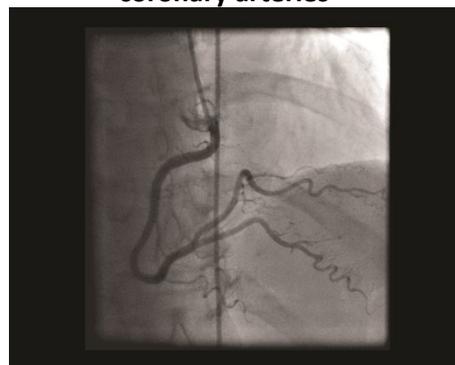
Once the test is finished the sheath in your artery will be removed and firm pressure applied to the site for a period of time, depending on the artery and type of pressure or closure device used.

You will remain in the day ward for 3-5 hours to monitor for any bleeding or any other problems. During this time, you will be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids to help excrete the contrast through your kidneys. Your pulse and blood pressure will be recorded often.

After 3-5 hours you will be discharged. If you do not live within 50 km of Christchurch hospital you will need to arrange accommodation for you and your carer on the night of the test. At the time of discharge an outpatient appointment will be made for you which you will be notified of by mail.



Contrast showing left coronary arteries



Contrast showing right coronary artery

Are there any risks?

Like all tests, a small amount of risk is involved. Most patients do not experience any pain or complications with this test. Heart rhythm changes or angina may occur during the test, and these are usually easily dealt with.

- Bleeding/bruising is the most common risk with a one in ten chance of moderate bruising.
- A one in 500 chance of a small stroke, heart attack or abnormal heart rhythm.
- A one in 200 chance of artery or nerve damage with long term symptoms.
- There is a one in 2000 chance of a complication resulting in death.
- If you have a history of allergy to X-Ray contrast it is important to let the hospital staff know.

Contact information

The Cardiology Day Unit is located on the first floor of Parkside West.

Contact Phone Numbers

Cardiology Day Unit: Phone 364-1071 (7.30 am-7.00 pm Monday-Friday)

After Hours:

Christchurch Hospital: 364-0640. When prompted enter extension 89121 for Ward 12 Cardiology

For more information about:

- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz
- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz