

Angioplasty and Vascular Stent Insertion

Patient information - Radiology Services

This information sheet outlines what you need to know and do before having an angioplasty and/or a vascular stent.

What is an Angioplasty and Vascular Stent?

An Angioplasty (also called balloon angioplasty) is performed to improve blood flow in the body's arteries. A vascular stent is a small wire mesh tube placed into an artery which has become narrowed or blocked to help keep the artery open and allow blood flow.

Where is the procedure performed?

The procedure is performed in the Radiology department. The specialist doctors use an x-ray machine to view the arteries during the procedure. This section of the Radiology department is called Interventional Radiology.

What do I need to do before the procedure?

- You may drink clear fluids (including tea, juice, jelly) in the 6 hours before the procedure but please do not eat during this time.
- If you are diabetic you may need to withhold your diabetic medication. Please contact the diabetes centre 364 0860 or your GP regarding this.
- Take your usual medications except your anti-coagulant medication, please stop this medication **4 days** before your procedure. **If you have a Mechanical Heart Valve please discuss with your doctor before stopping anti-coagulants.**
- A blood form will be sent to you in the post as you are required to have a blood test five days before the procedure.
- Do not take any form of sedative before the appointment.
- You will need to attend the appointment with an accompanying person to drive afterwards, help you at home and remain with you overnight.

Who performs the procedure?

The specialist doctor/radiologist performs the procedure with the assistance of a nurse. A radiographer will also be in the room taking the x-rays. At times there are also students and Medical Company representatives present during the procedures, they will need your consent for these people to be present.

How is an Angioplasty and stenting performed?

A specialist doctor called an Interventional Radiologist injects local anaesthetic into the skin to numb the area. A sheath is placed in the artery to provide access during the procedure. The doctor injects contrast (x-ray dye) to find the narrowed artery.

The radiologist threads a balloon-tipped catheter (a thin, plastic tube) to the site of a narrowed or blocked artery and then inflates the balloon to open the vessel. Inflating the balloon helps to restore blood flow by stretching the artery wall. The balloon is then deflated and removed from the artery. A stent may be placed during the procedure this is a permanent small flexible plastic or wire tube left in the artery after the angioplasty to help the artery stay in an open position to allow good blood flow through it. The stent is placed over the balloon and the balloon is inflated which allows the stent to be placed against the wall of the artery.

Will I be awake during the procedure?

You will be awake. You will normally be given a light sedative before the procedure to help you relax and you will have a nurse monitoring you during the procedure. While the x-rays are being taken, it is helpful to your doctor that you remain very still on the table. This helps improve the quality of the x-ray.

What will I feel during the procedure?

Local anaesthetic is injected under the skin to numb the area which can cause a mild stinging sensation for a short time. During the procedure you may feel some discomfort at the entry site and when the balloon is inflated but generally little pain is felt. Tell the radiologist or nurse if you experience pain or discomfort during the procedure. The contrast (x-ray dye) injected can give you a feeling of warmth or, occasionally a slight metallic taste in your mouth or a sensation of going to the toilet. The most difficult part of the procedure may be lying flat for several hours afterwards.

What are the risks and side effects?

Your Radiologist will discuss these fully with you and gain your agreement to treatment (written consent) before the procedure. Angioplasty and stenting have some complications associated with them, but these are rare. Patients may be allergic to the contrast used and may have hives, itching, or other reactions, which can be treated during examination or later if they occur. If you have a history of allergies or asthma, or if you have had an allergic reaction to contrast previously used in x-rays/CT scan please tell us before the procedure.

What happens after angioplasty/stenting?

Following the procedure the catheter will be withdrawn and a closure device will be placed in the groin or pressure will be applied by the radiologist over the site to prevent bleeding.

After your procedure you will be escorted back to the Day Ward by a nurse and an orderly. While recovering you will need to lie flat for a period of time. You can read or listen to music if desired whilst resting. Once you are allowed to sit up, you will still need to remain in the unit for another hour or two to ensure there are no issues. It is important that you will have someone to collect you from the Day Ward and stay with you overnight this is a requirement of the Radiology department.

If you feel any pain, discomfort or bleeding from the site at any time let the nurse know immediately. Most patients are discharged home, four to six hours after their procedure, however, please come prepared for an overnight stay, if necessary.

When you are discharged from hospital

- **You need to have someone stay with you for the first 24hrs post the procedure** in case you have some problems such as bleeding from the site.
- Rest as much as you are able to for the next 24hours post the procedure. This allows the artery to seal and minimise bleeding.

- After 24 hours you may walk short distances but don't lift heavy objects or strain while moving your bowels as this could cause bleeding at the site.
- You may shower the following day and remove the dressing but don't vigorously rub the area when washing. Pat the area dry with a towel.
- It is normal for the area to bruise and this will fade over two weeks.
- Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- Do not make important decisions or sign any important/legal documents for 24 hours.
- Do not drive a car or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours.
- Avoid activities where your impaired judgement or co-ordination could put you or others at risk.
- If you are on metformin please **withhold** as per instructions on Metformin Information Sheet. You will be given this after your procedure.
- Restart your anti-coagulants 24hrs after the procedure on the dose you stopped at, unless told otherwise.

What do I need to do if I have a problem?

If bleeding occurs from the puncture site or a swollen lump appears or you have pain.

- Lie down
- Press firmly on site of bleeding/lump for 10 minutes. This is best done by another person
- Contact the Emergency Department at Christchurch Hospital for further advice

If you develop any of or all of the following symptoms

- Severe headache
- Weakness or decreased sensation in your arms and/or legs
- Pale cold legs and feet
- Slurring of speech/impaired vision

**Seek medical advice immediately or call an ambulance
and come to the
Emergency Department at Christchurch Hospital**

Any other queries please contact your GP

How can I contact the Christchurch Hospital, Radiology Department?

If you have any questions relating to your appointment or the procedure.

Please phone:

(03) 364-1417 – Reception

For more information about:

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