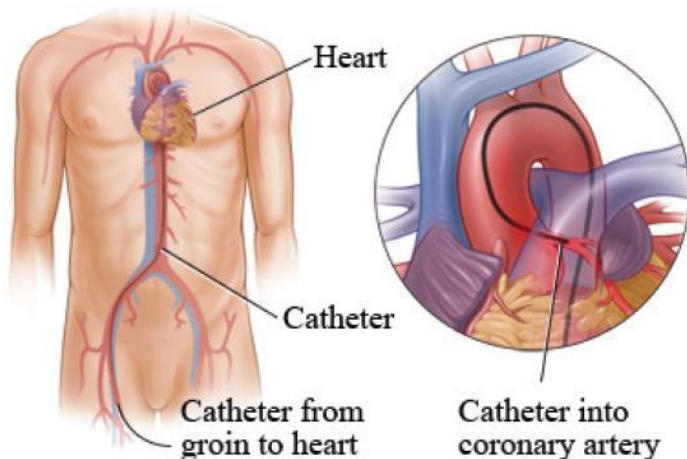


# Coronary Angiogram: About This Test



## What is a coronary angiogram?

A coronary angiogram is a test to look at the large blood vessels of your heart (coronary arteries). These blood vessels feed blood, oxygen, and nutrients to your heart.

Procedures can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for your procedure.

## Why is this test done?

This test is done to check blood flow in your coronary arteries. It can show the size and location of narrowed or blocked sections of an artery.

It's done for people who have, or are suspected of having, coronary artery disease, also known as heart disease. The test can show how serious the disease is and how best to treat it. Or it can be done for people who have symptoms of heart disease to find out if there is a problem with the artery.

## What happens before the procedure?

### Preparing for the procedure

- Understand exactly what procedure is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), Eliquis, Xarelto, Pradaxa clopidogrel (Plavix), aspirin, or others, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if you should stop taking these medicines before your procedure. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before your procedure. You may need to stop taking certain medicines a week or more before the procedure. So talk to your doctor as soon as you can.

## What happens on the day of the procedure?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your procedure may be canceled and rescheduled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of the procedure, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your procedure. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Do not shave the procedure site yourself.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

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## What happens during the test?

- You will get medicine to help you relax.
- A thin tube called a catheter is put into a blood vessel in your groin or arm.
- You will get a shot to numb the skin where the catheter goes in. You may feel mild pressure when the doctor moves the catheter through your blood vessel into your heart.
- Dye is put into your coronary arteries through the catheter. Your doctor can see the dye as it moves through the arteries. This lets your doctor look for areas that are narrowed or blocked.
- You may feel hot or flushed for several seconds when the dye is put in.
- If a blockage is found, and your doctor decides to correct it, he/she may decide to insert a 'stent' into the artery to open the blockage.

## How long does it take?

The test will take about 30 minutes. But you need time to get ready for it and time to recover. If a blockage is found and the doctor treats it, it can take a little longer.

## What happens after the test?

- You will stay in the recovery area for at least a few hours to make sure the catheter site starts to heal. You may have a bandage or a compression device on your groin or arm to prevent bleeding and expedite healing.
- If the catheter was placed in your groin, you may lie in bed for a few hours. If the catheter was put in your arm, you will need to keep your arm still for at least one hour.
- Nurses will check your heart rate and blood pressure. The nurse also will check the catheter site for bleeding.
- You may have a bruise where the catheter was put in your groin or arm. This is normal and will go away over the course of several days.
- You may or may not need to stay in the hospital overnight. You will get more instructions for what to do at home.
- Drink plenty of fluids for several hours after the test.

## Going home

- Be sure you have someone to drive you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine make it unsafe for you to drive.
- You will be given more specific instructions about recovering from your procedure. They will cover things like diet, wound care, follow-up care, driving, and getting back to your normal routine.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your procedure.
- You become ill before the procedure (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the procedure.