

Coronary Artery Disease: Coronary Angiogram

Coronary angiogram is a test to check your heart's coronary arteries. These blood vessels give blood, oxygen, and nutrients to your heart muscle.

If you have coronary artery disease, you may have angina symptoms caused by narrowed arteries. This disease also increases your risk of a heart attack.

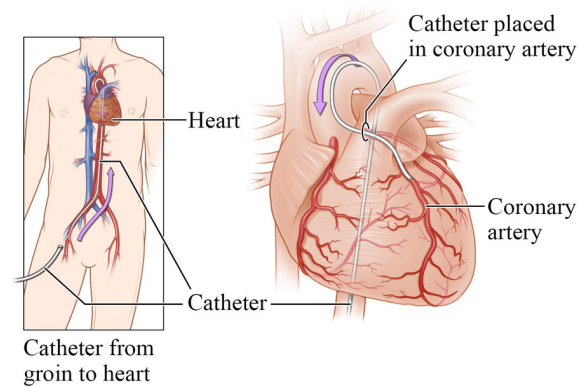
Before your angiogram, talk to your doctor about treatment options. And tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia.

Sometimes your doctor can treat a problem found during the test. For example, a narrowed artery can be opened with angioplasty. In other cases, treatments like a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) or angioplasty may be done at a later time.

How is this test done?

This test is done in a cardiac catheterization laboratory ("cath lab").

- A thin tube called a catheter is placed into a blood vessel in your groin or wrist. The catheter is threaded through the blood vessel to your heart.
- Dye is injected through the catheter. Your doctor will take X-ray pictures of the dye as it moves through the coronary arteries and the heart. The pictures show where coronary arteries are narrowed.



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What can you expect?

Before and during the test

- Follow your doctor's instructions about when to stop eating and drinking before the test.
- Follow your doctor's instructions on which of your usual medicines to take. Take them with a sip of water only.
- Before the test, you may get medicine to help you relax. You will lie on the X-ray table.
- You will get a shot to numb the skin where the catheter will be inserted. You may have a feeling of pressure when the doctor moves the catheter through your blood vessel.
- You may feel hot or flushed for several seconds when the dye is injected.
- You may be asked to breathe out, cough, hold your breath, or do other simple requests during the test.

- The test may take about 1 hour. But you need time to get ready for the test and time to recover. This may take a few hours.

After the test

- The catheter will be removed. A nurse may press on a bandage on the opening to prevent bleeding. A small device may also be used to close the blood vessel.
- You will be taken to a room where the catheter site and your heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature will be checked several times.
- You may have a bandage or a compression device on your groin or wrist at the catheter insertion site. This will prevent bleeding.
- If the catheter was put in your groin, you will have to lie in bed with your leg straight for up to a few hours after the test.

- If the catheter was put in your wrist, you may need to keep your arm still for at least 1 hour.
- You may or may not need to stay in the hospital overnight. You will get more instructions for what to do when you return home.

What are some of the risks?

Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of this test.

Risks of this test include:

- Having an allergic reaction to the dye used.
- Bleeding from the spot where the catheter was inserted.
- Having a heart attack, stroke, or other serious problem. These are very rare.