



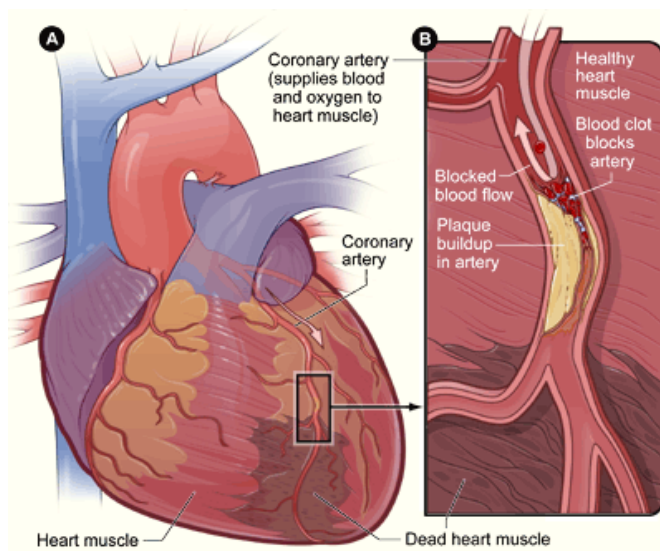
Pacific Cardiovascular Associates Medical Group

Cardiac Catheterization

Cardiac Catheterization (also called cardiac cath or coronary angiogram) is an invasive imaging procedure that allows your doctor to evaluate your heart function.

During a cardiac catheterization, a long, narrow tube called a catheter is inserted through a plastic introducer sheath (a short, hollow tube that is inserted into a blood vessel in your leg or arm). The catheter is guided through the blood vessel to the coronary arteries with the aid of a special x-ray machine, used to take pictures and do tests. Contrast material is injected through the catheter and x-ray movies are created as the contrast material moves through the heart's chambers, valves and major vessels.

The dye can show whether a waxy substance called plaque (plak) has built up inside your coronary arteries. Plaque can narrow or block the arteries and restrict blood flow to your heart



Cardiac catheterization is used to:

- Evaluate or confirm the presence of coronary artery disease, valve disease or disease of the aorta
- Evaluate heart muscle function
- Determine the need for further treatment (such as an interventional procedure or coronary artery bypass graft, or CABG, surgery)

How do I prepare for cardiac catheterization?

- **DO NOT** eat or drink anything for at least 6 hours before your test, or as directed by your physician.
- Tell your doctor about any medicines (including over-the-counter, herbs and vitamins) you take. The doctor may ask you not to take them before your cath procedure. Don't stop taking your medicine until your doctor tells you to.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you are allergic to anything, especially iodine, shellfish, latex or rubber products, medicines like penicillin, or X-ray dye.
- If you are on any type of blood thinner please get specific instructions from your Cardiologist on dosing prior to the procedure.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home after your procedure.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the test take?

The cardiac catheterization procedure itself generally takes 30 minutes, but the preparation and recovery time add several hours to your appointment time.

Will I be awake during the procedure?

Yes. You will be given a mild sedative to relax you, but you will be awake and conscious during the entire procedure. The doctor will use a local anesthetic to numb the catheter insertion site.

Cardiac catheterization is not considered a surgical procedure because there is no large incision used to open the chest, and the recovery time is much shorter than that of surgery. In some cases, surgery may be recommended afterward, depending on the results of the procedure.

What are the risks and possible side effects?

The risks of coronary catheterization are fairly low. They are often outweighed by the benefits to your heart. The risks include: Bleeding or clotting; Tearing or cracking of the artery lining; Allergic reaction to the contrast used during the procedure; Abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia); Heart attack, stroke or death (very rare).

Can I cancel my catheterization?

This procedure is done in the hospital and is not easily cancelled or rescheduled. It is important that you follow all the directions that you will be given to prepare for this procedure and this often include laboratory tests 3-5 days prior to your cardiac catheterization. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your PCA Cardiologist as soon as possible.

When will I go home?

Should an 'intervention' be done during this heart catheterization-such as balloon angioplasty (to widen the blocked coronary artery) or a placement of a permanent stent inside the artery, an overnight hospital stay is generally required. If no intervention is necessary, discharge is usually the same day.