A cardiac catheterization is one of the most reliable procedures for determining the anatomy and condition of the heart and its blood vessels. The study includes the observation of the heart’s pumping function and the visualization of the coronary arteries, which supply the heart muscle with blood.

**PREPARATION AND PROCEDURE**

You may be asked to come in for lab work, a chest X-ray or an EKG so your physician can review the results before your catheterization.

- Please refrain from any solid food for six hours before your procedure. You are encouraged to drink fluids until two hours before to your procedure. This is to help protect your kidneys from the catheterization dye.
- Consult your clinician to determine which medications you should take on the morning of your procedure. Bring a list of your medications, including dosages and times taken.
- Leave your valuables at home.
- Please remove any nail polish before your arrival at the hospital.
- If you are on Coumadin, Prednisone, or are diabetic, please notify your doctor at least four days prior to your procedure. The doctor may want to temporarily adjust your medications.

You will be awake during the entire procedure, which usually takes one to two hours and is performed as an outpatient admission. Your doctor and a nurse will be nearby at all times. They will explain the study as it progresses and answer any questions. If an unexpected or unexplained discomfort concerns you, tell them immediately.

Your groin area or the elbow area of your arm will be cleansed and shaved. An IV will be started to provide fluids and to administer medications ordered during catheterization.

When you arrive in the cardiovascular lab, you will be positioned on an X-ray table. Adhesive electrocardiogram patches or leads will be applied to your body so your heart rate and rhythm can be continuously monitored. You may also receive intravenous sedation in the lab.

The catheter site shaved earlier will be recleansed and covered with sterile drapes. After numbing the area with a local anesthetic, your doctor will make a small incision to allow access to an artery or vein, depending on the type of study planned. As the catheter (a thin, flexible tube) is inserted, you may experience a sensation of pressure. Oxygen may be given to you at this point. The lights will be switched on and off to enable your doctor to see the X-ray monitor.

As the procedure continues, your doctor or nurse may ask you to take a gentle, deep breath and hold it, or to cough deeply several times. Listen carefully for these instructions to ensure high-quality X-ray films without prolonging the procedure.
Radiopaque dye will be injected into the catheter, enabling the cardiologist to see coronary arteries and chambers of the heart. The camera will be tilted at several angles as the doctor observes your heart. Cinefluorograms (short videos) will be taken during the procedure so your doctor may interpret the results later.

When the pumping chamber (ventricle) of your heart is being studied, you will have a warm sensation throughout much of your body. This is a common experience for most patients, and you should not be alarmed by it. It may occur several times, but should last for only 20 to 25 seconds.

When the catheter is removed, your doctor will apply pressure or suture the incision and apply a snug dressing to prevent bleeding. The procedure will then be complete, and you will be transported back to your room.

The cardiologist will visit you later that day to discuss the results of your catheterization.

**RECOVERY**

**IN THE RECOVERY ROOM**

The incision site should not be disturbed for several hours.

With an arm incision, exercising your shoulder without bending the elbow is recommended to prevent stiffness.

With a groin incision, you must remain in bed for approximately six hours, keeping your leg straight at the hip. You will be told when you can resume normal activities. If your physician sutures your groin incision, you will lie flat for approximately one to two hours.

When you return to your room, the medications administered during the procedure might make you drowsy. Oral fluids are encouraged to eliminate dye from your system. Your IV will be discontinued two to three hours after the procedure. Eating might also be permitted. The nursing staff will check your catheterization site and vital signs frequently. For your safety, ring for assistance the first time you get out of bed. If the incision site becomes uncomfortable, medication is available from the nurse. Please have someone available to drive you home after you have been discharged.
AT HOME

Call your cardiologist if you note any of the following:

- Excessive drainage
- Numbness or tingling
- Excessive pain at the incision site
- Change in the hand or leg
- Red streaks running above or below the incision

You may expect bruising and tenderness around the incision and a small almond-sized lump under the incision site. Do not participate in activity that requires heavy lifting or bending at the incision site (such as bowling or golfing) until your physician allows you to do so.

**For arm incisions**, keep the incision clean and dry. Wrap it with plastic wrap when bathing or showering, and cover the incision with a bandage or small dressing when your clothing is rubbing, or when you are in dusty areas or outside. Let the incision be open to the air as much as possible.

**For groin incisions**, keep the incision clean. Cover the incision with a bandage or small dressing for 24 hours after discharge, and check it occasionally to keep it dry.

**YOUR PROCEDURE IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

Date:     ___/___/____  
Arrival Time:  _____________  
Procedure Time: _____________  

☐ Appleton Medical Center  
Central Registration (hospital first floor)  
1818 N. Meade Street (enter Grant St.)  
Appleton, WI 54911  
731-4101 or (800) 236-4101

☐ Theda Clark Medical Center  
Outpatient Registration (first floor)  
130 Second Street  
Neenah, WI 54956  
(920)729-3100 or (800) 236-3122

☐ Other Location:  
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