



Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory

The Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory uses the most advanced x-ray and monitoring equipment to perform diagnostic and interventional procedures during your evaluation and treatment. All Staff members -- physicians, nurses and cardiovascular technologists -- are highly trained and skilled to evaluate and treat your condition.

Preparation

A catheter is a small, flexible tube that can be inserted in veins to enable tests as well as to deliver fluids, nutrients, and medications. Before catheterization, your physician will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions or concerns you may have. A nurse will make sure all the appropriate consent forms are signed by you.

You will be admitted to the hospital the evening before or the day of your procedure. It may be necessary to have a chest x-ray or your blood tested. Your nurse will shave your groin area. You will be given a hospital gown and asked to remove all undergarments. You will not be able to eat or drink after midnight.

Approximately 30 minutes to one hour before the procedure, you will be asked to go to the bathroom and urinate. You may be given a pre-op medication. You will be asked to remain in bed. An intravenous line (IV) will be started and monitoring electrodes will be placed on your thigh and ribs.

The Procedure

The Cardiac Cath Lab personnel will transport you on a cart from your room to the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory (CCL) where you will be moved to the radiographic table. Your gown will be removed and you will be covered with a blanket.

Your groin will be washed with a special antibacterial soap. A sterile sheet will be positioned over the puncture site. Your cardiologists will inject a local anesthetic and a catheter will be placed in the blood vessel.

The physician will use what is called fluoroscopy to monitor the placement of the catheter. Several different catheters will be used during the procedure. A radiopaque solution called 'contrast' will be injected. This solution is what shows up on the monitoring equipment and indicates to the physician how your heart is

working. The first injection of contrast will visualize the ventricle--main pumping chamber of the heart. You may feel a hot flash all over, but this feeling will last less than a minute.

Next, several pictures will be taken of your coronary arteries. You will be asked to take deep breaths and hold your breath for short periods of time. You may also be asked to cough.

If at anytime during the procedure you feel sick to the stomach or have chest pain, be sure to tell the staff. You may be given various medications as specified by the physician during the procedure. These medications will usually be given through the 'IV' line. In some cases nitroglycerin may be placed under your tongue.

After the Procedure

With the catheter in place, you will be moved to your room and put in your bed. The nurse or technician will then remove the catheter and hold pressure at the puncture site at least ten minutes. Relax while the pressure is being held. Your puncture site will be observed to assure there is no bleeding or swelling. You should immediately report any swelling, or any feeling of pressure or wetness. The nursing staff will also monitor your blood pressure for several hours, and will check the pulse in your foot. A closure device may be used after the procedure is completed at the puncture site.

For several hours following the procedure, you will be asked to limit your activity and lie flat. Be sure to keep your leg straight. At this time, you will be able to eat and will be encouraged to drink liquids to help the body flush the contrast solution through the kidneys.

Later in the day, your physician will review your films and discuss the findings with you. The staff is willing to answer your questions at anytime before, during or after the procedure.

When you are discharged, you will need a ride home from the hospital. You may resume normal activities according to your discharge instructions. The dressing on your groin may be removed the next day.

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