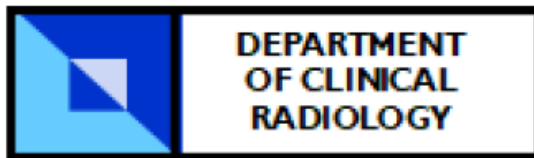


Having a Cerebral Angiogram

Information for patients



Cerebral Angiogram

A cerebral angiogram is the most accurate way to visualise the blood vessels in the head. Your doctor should have discussed the precise reasons why you are having an angiogram with you.

This information sheet is a summary designed to give you a very brief overview of what the procedure involves. This is not a replacement for discussing the procedure and risks with your doctor. There will be plenty of time for this when you come into hospital. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

What does the procedure involve?

A cerebral angiogram is an X-ray test performed by a specialist doctor (a Neuroradiologist). The angiogram gives a detailed map of the brain's blood supply and will show any abnormalities.

The procedure usually takes approximately 30 minutes but can take a bit longer in some people. Most patients go home from hospital the same day, although some stay overnight if they live far away, or if the procedure occurs later in the day, as you may be asked to stay with us for six hours after the procedure. There is no need to fast before this procedure and you should continue to take your normal medication unless otherwise instructed.

A small tube (known as a catheter) is inserted into one of the blood vessels in the groin and then manoeuvred into the blood vessels in the neck that supply the brain. A dye (also known as a contrast agent) is then injected through the catheter and X-ray pictures are taken as the dye flows through the blood vessels.

When the dye is injected people often experience different sensations such as heat or pressure in one side of their face or see flashing lights; such sensations pass very quickly. Following the procedure you may have to lie flat for four hours to allow for the puncture site at the groin to heal. You will then start gently walking around the ward before you can go home. This is to ensure the site has healed properly.

Alternatively, a closure device may be used and you can be discharged earlier. You should not drive and arrange for someone to take you home and stay with you overnight.

Summary of the risks involved

All medical procedures have risks. The risks associated with a cerebral angiogram are very small and the doctor who has requested the angiogram feels the benefits of doing it outweighs these risks.

A doctor will talk to you on the day of your procedure to discuss these risks. Some that you might like to know about in advance are:

Stroke or 'mini-stroke': Between 1 in 50 and 1 in 300 people having an angiogram can suffer from a stroke or 'mini-stroke' (which might cause difficulties with moving an arm or a leg, or difficulties with walking, speaking or loss of vision). If this happens, most patients will make a full recovery within 24 hours. The risk of a permanent problem is much less than 1 in 1000.

Bruising: About 1 in 25 people will get a large bruise (called a haematoma) where the needle goes into the blood vessel in their groin. This only rarely needs any treatment.

Allergic reaction: 1 in 100 people will have an allergic reaction to the dye that is used (but these reactions are rarely serious).

Other very rare but serious complications: These include kidney failure and impaired blood supply to leg (1 in 1000 or even less).

Radiation risk

The procedure you will be attending for is an angiogram. This procedure will help your doctor make a diagnosis or monitor the progress of your treatment. To guide us during the procedure we use x-rays, the benefits of using x-ray guidance for the procedure are thought to outweigh the very low risk from the x-rays themselves. Every day we are exposed to some natural background radiation from the air we breathe, the food we eat, the environment we live in and even from flying on a plane. Each medical x-ray gives us a small additional dose on top of this natural background radiation. The angiogram you will be having is equivalent to 1 year of natural background radiation. It is important to note that the amount of x-rays used will carry a low risk.

Although it is important to know about these risks, it is also important to remember that most people don't suffer any complications as a result of having a cerebral angiogram and that the risk of a serious complication is very small. There will be plenty of opportunity to discuss anything you might be worried about with the doctors on the day of your angiogram.

Further information

You might find these websites helpful:

www.brainandspine.org.uk



www.avmsupport.org.uk



Keeping your appointment

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Public transport and travel information

Bus details available from:

Lothian Buses on **0131 555 6363** or www.lothianbuses.co.uk

Traveline Scotland on **08712002233** or
www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from:

National Rail Enquiries on **03457 484 950** or
www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient transport

Patient Transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Telephone 0300 123 1236 *calls charged at local rate up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number available. Hard of hearing or speech Impaired? Use text relay: 18001-0300 123 1236* (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr answer service).

Interpretation and translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing in patient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.

Should you have any urgent
concerns please contact:

**Clinical Nurse Specialist for
Interventional Neuroradiology:
0131 312 0863**