

Cerebral Angiogram

A cerebral angiogram is an exam to look at the blood vessels in the brain. The doctor takes a set of x-ray pictures (fluoroscopy) with the use of contrast (x-ray dye). The contrast allows the doctor to see the blood vessels (arteries) in the neck and head on TV screens in real time. There is no treatment done during this exam. The exam often lasts 1-2 hours.

It is used to check the blood flow through an artery. The doctor may want this done to check blood flow before surgery, to look for a blockage, or to look at an aneurysm.

Tell us if you have sleep apnea or use a machine to sleep. This is important to know so we can safely use medicines that make you sleepy during the exam.

Before the Exam

You will need a physical and labs within 30 days. This can be done by a Primary Care Provider or with one of our Neuroendovascular practitioners.

One of our nurses will call you once the angiogram is scheduled and tell you what is needed before the exam. They review medicines and allergies at that time. Certain medicines will be held before the exam.

You will get a second call from one of the nurses the day before. They will let you know what time to arrive and when to stop eating and drinking.

Day of the Exam

- **You will need a responsible driver to take you home.**
- **Do not** eat solid foods or milk for 6 hours before.

- **Do not** drink clear liquids (anything you can see through) **less** than 2 hours before.
- You may take routine medicines with small sips of water unless you were told not to.
- Arrive an hour before your exam for check-in.

Getting Ready

- You will change into a gown and an IV will be started.
- If additional labs or a urine specimen are needed, we will collect them at this time.
- A doctor will go over details of the exam and answer any questions.
- We will take you to a special room (the angio suite).
- You will lie flat on a table that moves.
- A nurse will connect monitors to watch your heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure.
- You will get medicine to make you sleepy.
- The groin area just above your leg (near the hip bone and inner thigh) will be shaved and then cleansed with a liquid that may feel very cold.
- We will cover you with sterile sheets and numb that site before the small tube (catheter) is placed into the artery.

During the Exam

You will need to lie very still. The catheter is guided through the blood vessels, the path will be checked by x-rays. When it is in place, you will get many injections of x-ray dye. There may be a warm feeling on the

side of your neck and face, lasting 30-60 seconds. This is normal.

The clicking noise you hear from the x-ray machines is normal. You may also notice the lights in the room turning on and off. The doctors and staff step out of the room for a short time while the x-rays are being taken. At any time, if you feel uncomfortable or short of breath, tell your doctor.

After the Exam

We will remove the catheter and apply firm pressure on the area for about 15- minutes to prevent bleeding.

Recovery can last one to six hours, depending on if we are able to use a closure device. The closure device seals the puncture site in your artery. During that time, you will need to keep your leg straight. You may roll side to side with help from your nurse.

A nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, and the catheter site often after the test. You will need to drink plenty of fluids to help flush the dye from your system. You should drink 10-20 glasses of fluid for the first 24 hours.

You may remove the bandage over the groin the next day and gently wash the area with a mild soap and water. Pat dry **do not rub**.

Activities

For one week:

- Do **not** soak in a bathtub or hot tub.

- **No** heavy lifting (over 10 pounds).
- **No** vigorous activity.
- **No** swimming.

What to Expect

- The puncture site might be tender or sore. This often goes away after a few days, but it can last up to one week. (May use OTC Tylenol for pain control if told to do so.)
- You may notice some bruising in your groin. This goes away after 2-3 weeks.
- Some patients feel a small hard bump about the size of a peanut at the groin site. This is normal and often goes away after several months.

When to Call

- The puncture site becomes red or hot.
- Any yellow or green drainage from the site.
- Swelling at the site.
- A fever above 100°F.
- Severe pain or spasm in the leg.
- Any numbness or tingling in the foot or leg.
- Any itching, hives, or rash.

Who to Call

Neuroendovascular

Monday- Friday- 8AM- 5PM

608-263-4730

After hours, weekends and holiday, call paging at **608-262-2122**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7417