CORONARY ANGIOGRAPHY

WHAT IS CORONARY ANGIOGRAPHY:
This is an x-ray exploration of the main arteries connected to the heart. The objective of the examination is to determine if the inner walls of the arteries have constrictions or obstructions that reduce the flow of blood to the heart muscles. It is also almost always standard practice to examine the ventricles (the heart’s “chambers”) and valves.

HOW THE EXAMINATION IS PERFORMED
You will be awake throughout the whole procedure. It is important that you keep quite still.
Medication is available if required to help you relax both prior to and during the examination.
The actual procedure is done through a thin plastic tube that is entered through an artery at the wrist or in the groin and led up to the heart.

VARIOUS RESULTS AV CORONARY ANGIOGRAPHY:
– Normal arteries and cardiac valves.
– Very low constriction of the arteries that propping open the artery by balloon or operation is not necessary.
– Balloon blocking.
– Operating on the main arteries or cardiac valves.
WHAT IS PERCUTANEOUS CORONARY INTERVENTION (PCI):
In simple terms PCI is a treatment procedure that unblocks narrowed coronary arteries without performing surgery. A balloon is led up to the restricted area in the artery. The balloon is then inflated, and the fatty deposit inside the artery is thus pressed up into the artery walls and the restricted – or partially blocked area in the artery is opened up.

To ensure that the artery stays open, it is often fairly standard procedure to insert a so-called STENT. A STENT is a steel wire net in cylinder form.

In the majority of cases PCI is performed at the same time as the examination.

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE:
The examination takes between 30 minutes and 1 hour. If PCI is performed at the same time the whole procedure can take a further 30 minutes to 2 hours.

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULT?
You will be informed of the result as soon as the examination has been completed.

PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATION:
You will be fasting from 24.00 on the evening prior to the day of your operation. This means that you must not eat or smoke, but you can drink water or weak fruit juice up to the time of your operation.
Take your early morning medication as usual, (but not diuretics, Marevan, Glucophage, Metformin, Orabet or Insulin)
Remove jewellery and nail varnish/polish.
Shower with normal soap in the morning.
Remember to empty your bladder before the examination.
DOES IT HURT?
You will feel a slight pinprick when the doctor administers the local anaesthetic in your arm or groin. You may feel some pressure when the plastic tube is inserted into the vein in your arm. When the plastic tubing is inserted into your arm a medical preparation is administered at the same time that will produce a brief, quite intense warmth in the underarm and fingers. A few people react to the contrast medium. This may manifest itself as itchiness, a rash or shimmering/flickering in your vision. When the contrast medium enters your bloodstream your body may feel warm.

If on completion of the examination the doctor carries out an PCI, you may experience some chest pains when the balloon is pumped up. This because the balloon hinders the flow of blood to the arteries. Any pain you may feel will stop quite quickly when the balloon is emptied.

Don't be afraid of talking to the operating staff while the procedure is carried out. Tell them if you are experiencing pain or feel unwell.

COMPLICATIONS:
All examinations and medical procedures carried out through the circulatory system have a certain level of inherent risk that complications can arise. Cardiac infarction can incur, but as a general rule these are very minor and of no consequence. On extremely rare occasions a patient may suffer a stroke during the procedure.

AFTER THE TREATMENT:
After the treatment you will be taken back to the monitoring ward. You will be monitored for an hour or two, and the nurse will provide you a light meal and a beverage.

When the examination is conducted through the arm you will have a pressure dressing over the entry point to stop bleeding. The dressing must remain in place for 4 hours and your arm must be allowed to rest (no strain or load) for the remainder of the day.

If the entry point is through the groin then either a pressure dressing will be used that must remain in place for 4 hours or the vein will be closed using a different method without applying a pressure dressing. You will be required to lie as motionless as possible on your back. It's important that you keep your leg still in order to avoid bleeding and swelling.
AFTER THE CORONARY ANGIOGRAPHY

When you are back on the monitoring ward you will be checked for bleeding. You can eat a light meal and drink after the examination. Drink plenty of fluids to help flush the contrast medium out of your system.

When the examination is conducted through the arm you will have a pressure dressing over the entry point to stop bleeding. The dressing must remain in place for 4 hours and your arm must be allowed to rest (no strain or load) for the remainder of the day.

If the entry point is through the groin then either a pressure dressing will be used that must remain in place for 4 hours or the vein will be closed using a different method without applying a pressure dressing. You will be required to lie as motionless as possible on your back. It's important that you keep your leg still in order to avoid bleeding and swelling.

After the treatment some patients may experience:
- Some discomfort from the pressure of the dressing in the form of mild pain or numbness.
- Swelling and bleeding at the entry point.

If you are experiencing discomfort or bleeding tell the nurse.

When the pressure dressing is removed this will be replaced by a smaller dressing over the entry point to protect against infection. Keep this on until the next day or until you are back home. The dressing must be changed if it becomes wet.
DISCHARGE AND TRAVEL:
Normally the same day, at the earliest 6 hours after the examination. Some patients are kept in until the following day.
The ward secretary makes the necessary travel arrangements to your home.
A letter will be sent to your regular doctor with the results of the examination.

BACK HOME AGAIN:
THE ENTRY POINT:
Avoid placing strain or load on your wrist while you still feel discomfort from the intrusion.
Avoid heavy lifts for the first three to four days after the examination.
It’s usual to see bruising around the entry point and you may feel some tenderness/soreness for the first few days.
If you experience pain in your arm or groin, Paracetamol is recommended.

If the entry point or surrounding area becomes increasingly painful, red or swollen, contact your doctor.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries or questions. Telephone No. 63924200

Best regards from all the staff of the Cardiology Department
AFTER A PERCUTANEOUS CORONARY INTERVENTION (PCI)

When you are back in the monitoring ward your heart rhythm is monitored and the nurse checks for bleeding. You will be able to have a light meal and drink shortly after the treatment. Drink plenty of fluids to help flush the contrast medium out of your system.

When the examination is conducted through the arm you will have a pressure dressing over the entry point to stop bleeding. The dressing must remain in place for 4 hours and your arm must be allowed to rest (no strain or load) for the remainder of the day.
If the entry point is through the groin then either a pressure dressing will be used that must remain in place for 4 hours or the vein will be closed using a different method without applying a pressure dressing. You will be required to lie as motionless as possible on your back. It's important that you keep your leg still in order to avoid bleeding and swelling.

After the treatment some patients may experience:
Some discomfort from the pressure of the dressing in the form of mild pain or numbness.
Swelling and bleeding at the entry point.

When the pressure dressing is removed this will be replaced by a smaller dressing over the entry point to protect against infection. Keep this on until the next day or until you are back home. The dressing must be changed if it becomes wet.

If you are experiencing discomfort or bleeding tell the nurse.
DISCHARGE AND TRAVEL:
Normally the day after the treatment.
The Doctor who treated you will talk to you prior to discharge.
The ward secretary makes the necessary travel arrangements to your home.
A letter will be sent to your regular doctor with the results of the examination.

BACK HOME AGAIN:

THE ENTRY POINT:
Avoid placing strain or load on your wrist while you still feel discomfort from the intrusion.
Avoid heavy lifts for the first three to four days after the examination.
It’s usual to see bruising around the entry point and you may feel some tenderness/soreness for the first few days.
If you experience pain in your arm or groin, Paracetamol is recommended.

If the entry point or surrounding area becomes increasingly painful, red or swollen, contact your doctor.

PAIN OR DISCOMFORT:
It’s not unusual to feel some mild pain or discomfort in the chest after treatment.
When a stent is inserted the layer of fat and calcium deposits is pressed out towards the inner walls of the artery. This can be experienced as tenderness, irritation or stinging in the chest region. It can be difficult to differentiate between these sensations and this that originate from the arteries (angina pectoris).

Stents vary from 8 to 30 mm in length. The photograph shows a stent of approximately 30 mm.
MEDICATION:
After PCI treatment and stent insertion you will have to take anticoagulants to prevent a thrombosis in the stent. You will be taking Albyl-E until further notice, and it may also be necessary to take Plavix for a few months after treatment. Any changes in medication must be prescribed by your doctor. Never change your medicine yourself.

ACTIVITY AND WORK:
Many patients start work again just a few days after PCI treatment. You can resume your usual activities the first 2 – 3 months after having the treatment, but avoid excessive physical effort. You can increase your level of physical activity over time.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY
You can resume a normal sex life as soon as feel you can and want to

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS:
A number of patients may experience a tendency to depression, mood changes and impatience. These are common reactions and they will pass with time.

FOLLOWING UP:
Follow up after PCI treatment is by your regular doctor, and if necessary a heart specialist at your local hospital.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries or questions.
Telephone No. 63924200

Best regards from all the staff of the Cardiology Department