

# Angiogram

**Halifax Infirmary  
Victoria General**

# Angiogram

## What is an angiogram?

- An angiogram is a special X-ray test. A clear dye will be injected into your blood vessels. The dye makes your blood vessels show up better on the X-ray.
- Your doctor wants to study the blood vessels in your \_\_\_\_\_.

## Where will the test be done?

- The test will be done in the Diagnostic Imaging Department at the:
  - ☐ Halifax Infirmary
    - › Go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Register at the Diagnostic Imaging registration desk.
  - ☐ Victoria General
    - › Go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Dickson Building. Register at the Diagnostic Imaging registration desk.

## How do I get ready for this test?

- You must plan to have a responsible adult take you home after your test and stay with you overnight.
- **Do not** drive yourself.
- You may take a bus or a taxi home if a responsible adult goes with you.

## How long will I be at the hospital?

- You should plan to be at the hospital for 6 to 7 hours.
- Your angiogram will be done in the morning. It will take 1 to 2 hours. Then, you will rest for at least 4 hours before you go home.

**If you live more than 50 km from a hospital, you must stay in Halifax overnight after your test. This is for your safety.**

## Before your test

- Tell the doctor who referred you for this test if you are pregnant or have any allergies.

### 4 weeks (1 month) before your test:

- You will need to have blood tests in the 4 weeks just before your test. Your referring doctor will book these tests for you.
- If you are using products to help you stop smoking (like nicotine gum, patches, or spray), you may keep taking them.
- If you are taking a blood thinner medication, you **may** need to stop taking it before your test. **Tell your doctor if you are taking a blood thinner**, like:
  - › Aspirin®
  - › Clopidogrel
  - › Warfarin
  - › Heparin
  - › Dabigatran
  - › Rivaroxaban
  - › Apixaban
- **If you have a stent or a flow diverter:**
  - › **Do not** stop taking your blood thinner.

- **If you are taking a blood thinner and your doctor tells you to stop taking it before your test:**
  - › You may need to have a blood test a few days before your angiogram. This is to make sure you are able to have the angiogram.
  - › If you did not have this blood test ahead of time, there may be a delay on the day of your angiogram.

## **The day before your test**

### **On the evening before your test:**

- You must drink **at least 4 cups** (32 oz) of fluids (like milk, juice, tea, coffee, or water). You may drink fluids until the time of your test.
- **Do not** eat any solid foods after midnight on the night before your test.

## **The day of your test**

**It is very important to follow these instructions:**

- **Do not** eat breakfast on the day of your test.
- **Do not** take insulin or any other diabetes medications on the morning of your test.  
**You may take your other medications with small sips of water.**
- **Bring all of your medications** (including insulin, other diabetes medications, prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements) in their original containers with you to the hospital.

## How is the test done?

- You will be asked to review and sign a consent form. A member of your health care team will go over this form with you and answer any questions you may have.
  - A member of your health care team will put an intravenous (I.V.) tube in your arm or the back of your hand using a needle. This is done:
    - › to give you fluids.
    - › to give you sedation (medication to help you relax), if needed.
    - › in case you have an allergic reaction.
  - Depending on the type of angiogram you are having, it may be done through your:
    - › **Femoral artery** (a large blood vessel that supplies blood to your lower body) in your groin (where your leg meets your body)
- or**
- › **Radial artery** (a blood vessel that supplies blood to your hands and lower arms) in your wrist
- **If you are having the test done through your femoral artery**, a nurse will shave an area in both groins.
- They will wash your groin or wrist with a disinfectant to get rid of germs and cover it with sterile (clean) towels.

- The surgeon will inject freezing medication into your groin or wrist so you will not feel any pain.
- They will make a small incision (cut) and insert a catheter (long, plastic tube) into your artery. They will move the catheter up the artery until it reaches the area they want to look at.
- Then, they will inject dye through the catheter into your blood vessels. You may have a warm feeling for a few seconds when the dye is injected.
- A series of X-rays will be taken.
- The catheter will be removed.
- To help stop any bleeding, a member of your health care team will put pressure on the insertion site (where the catheter entered your body) for 10 minutes or put a small plug in your artery. If the incision was in your wrist, they may use an inflatable (can be made bigger with air) arm band to put pressure on the site.
- You will be taken to the Recovery Room.



## What will happen after the test?

- A nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse, and insertion site several times.

### If the incision was in your groin:

- You will be on bed rest for at least 4 hours.  
**Do not** lift your head or bend your affected leg.
- Your nurse will tell you when you can have the head of your bed raised and when you can get up.
- Your insertion site may start to bleed.

### If the incision was in your arm:

- You will rest and your nurse will check you closely for at least 2 hours.

**Use the call button to alert your nurse right away if you have any pain, swelling, or bleeding.**

- You will get lunch or a snack, and a drink.
- You will be able to leave the hospital after your bed rest. A responsible adult must take you home and stay with you overnight.
- The Recovery Room nurse will give you a list of things to expect and things to do when you get home.

## After your test

### For 3 days after your test:

- **Do not** lift anything heavy.
- **Do not** do any strenuous (hard) activities. If you are not sure about an activity, please ask a member of your health care team before you go home.
- **Do not** bend over if your incision is in your groin.

### At home

- If you have any new pain or bleeding, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.
- Do not drive yourself.

## **When will I get the test results?**

- Your doctor will usually share the results with you within 5 days of your test.

## **If you have questions about your care after your test:**

- Please talk to a nurse in the Interventional Radiology Unit:
  - › Phone: 902-473-5347

## **If you have questions about your appointment:**

- Call the Interventional Radiology Department:  
Halifax Infirmary
  - › Phone: 902-473-5329

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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