



Patient & Family Guide
2018

Right Heart Catheterization

Aussi disponible en français :
Cathétérisme cardiaque droit (FF85-1913)

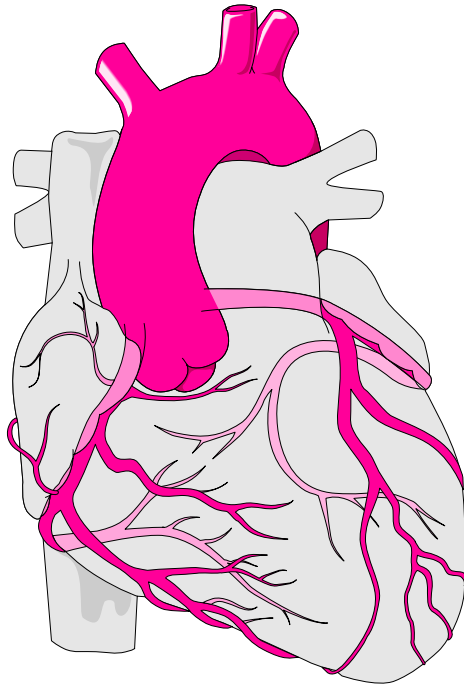


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Right Heart Catheterization

What is a right heart catheterization?

This special test is used to find out how well your heart muscle is working. Blood pressure readings will be taken on the right side of your heart. Blood samples may be taken to measure the oxygen levels in your heart. This test will help your doctor find the cause of your heart problem and recommend your treatment.



How do I get ready for this test?

You will visit your cardiologist (heart doctor) before your test. They will examine you, explain the test and sign a consent form with you. You may have some routine blood samples taken. An EKG may be needed if this has not been done in the recent past.

Can I take my usual medications before this test?

- You may take most of your usual medications on the evening before and on the day of your test. Your doctor will go over your medications with you. Sometimes, certain medications should not be taken before this test.
- If you take a blood thinner (such as warfarin, Pradaxa[®], apixaban, rivaroxaban or edoxaban) the doctor may want you to stop this medication several days before the test or change it to a form of low molecular weight heparin such as Fragmin[®].
- Usually aspirin (ASA) and clopidogrel (Plavix[®]) can be taken as usual.

Can I eat and drink before this test?

Yes, you may follow your usual diet on the day before and on the day of your test.

How is a right heart catheterization done?

Your test will be done in the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, Level 6, Halifax Infirmary.

- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. Please take off any jewelry, underwear and socks.
- You may wear your glasses, dentures and hearing aid(s), if needed.
- You will be asked to use the bathroom and empty your bladder (pee) just before your test.
- You will wait in the recovery area until the team is ready for you in the catheterization room.
- You will be taken to the catheterization room by a nurse and helped onto a hard narrow table.
- The room will be cool. You will see special X-ray equipment and monitors around you.
- Small sticky patches will be placed on your chest and attached to a heart monitor.
- A small area on your neck or groin will be shaved and washed with a cold solution.
- Your body will be draped with clean sheets.
- The doctor will freeze the area on your neck or groin so you should feel no pain.

- Small catheters (tubes) are passed through a vein to the right side of your heart. You may be asked to take a deep breath to help move the catheter.
- The doctor will measure the pressure in your heart and take blood samples to measure the oxygen levels. A biopsy (small piece of tissue) of your heart muscle may also be taken. Your doctor will talk about this with you first.
- The test will take about 30-60 minutes.

Are there any risks with this test?

This procedure is safe and usually well tolerated, but there are still some risks.

- There could be bleeding at the puncture site with pain and bruising. It is rare (less than one in 20 patients) that this bleeding is bad enough to require surgery or a transfusion. Usually, the bleeding is minor and the pain at the puncture site goes away within a day.
- Extra heartbeats or palpitations (a fast heartbeat) can happen when the catheter is placed in your heart. It is very rare that this causes any problem but you may feel these palpitations during the test.
- The risk of serious complications is very rare (less than 1%) but your doctor will talk about the risks with you.

How long will I be in bed after my test?

After your procedure, a nurse will go over what you need to know.

- If a vein in your neck was used, you don't need to stay in bed. You must stay in the recovery area for about 20 minutes where the nurse will check your blood pressure and observe your puncture site for any bleeding.
- If a vein in your groin was used, you must stay flat in bed for about 2 hours. This will give the puncture site time to heal and prevent bleeding.
- Do not lift your head off the pillow. You may turn your head from side to side.
- Do not put your elbows above your shoulders or your arms behind your head.
- Do not cross your legs or bend your knees.
- You may wiggle your toes and flex your feet.
- The head of the bed can be raised up slightly.

How can I prevent bleeding from the puncture site in my groin?

- Press gently on the puncture site when you laugh, cough, sneeze, or go to the bathroom for the next 2 days.
- Blood can flow from the puncture site (bleeding), or stay under the skin in the form of a firm “lump.” This may range in size from a “walnut” to a “golf ball,” or larger.
- If you notice bleeding or a growing lump while you are in the hospital, apply firm pressure with your hand to the site, return to bed and ring for the nurse.
- If bleeding or a lump under the skin happens after you leave the hospital, lie on your back and apply firm pressure until the bleeding stops or the lump gets smaller. You may need someone to help you with this.
- If a lump does not soften after 5 minutes of pressure, have your family health care provider check it the next day.
- If you are not able to stop the bleeding, or the lump keeps getting bigger, call 911 to take you to the nearest Emergency Department.

When will I be discharged from the hospital?

If you are an inpatient, please talk with your nurse about your discharge plan.

If you are an outpatient:

- If a vein in your neck was used for the test, you will be discharged about 20 minutes after your procedure.
- If a vein in your groin was used, you will be discharged about 2 hours after your procedure.
- **It is recommended that a responsible adult come to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab to take you home.** It is important to have someone with you for the first few hours after discharge in case you have bleeding and need help.

When can I take a bath?

- You may shower the morning after your procedure.
- Do not point the shower stream right at the puncture site.
- Do not take a tub bath or swim in a pool for 2 days.

When can I take off my Band-Aid®?

The Band-Aid® may be removed on the next evening, after your test.

When can I drive?

If you are an inpatient, please talk with your cardiologist about when you can drive.

If you are an outpatient, ask your doctor if you received sedation during this procedure.

- If you received sedation, a responsible adult must drive you home.
- You should not drive a car or operate machinery for 24 hours after you receive sedation.

When can I do my regular exercises again?

- If a vein in your neck was used, you can go back to your regular exercise right away.
- If a vein in your groin was used:
 - › Take your time climbing stairs.
 - › Don't walk too fast.
 - › Don't do any rough sports, such as jogging or tennis, for 3 days after your test.
 - › Avoid bending, squatting and heavy lifting for at least 2 days.

When can I return to work?

Ask your cardiologist when you can go back to work. The kind of work you do will help your cardiologist decide when you can go back to work.

Call 911 to take you to the nearest Emergency Department if you:

- Are not able to stop bleeding at the puncture site.
- Have intense (strong) pain at the puncture site.
- Have severe (very bad) chest pain or pressure, or trouble breathing.

Talk to your family doctor if you:

- Have fever or chills.
- See pus (fluid) at the puncture site.
- Notice a firm lump at the puncture site that does not soften after applying pressure for 5 minutes.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

