Why am I having this procedure?

Before your procedure?

What do I need to bring?

After your procedure?

Coronary angiogram
Why am I having an angiogram/angioplasty?

You have received an appointment today after a referral has been sent by your cardiologist, or after you have attended the rapid access chest pain clinic. You may also have had other tests such as an echocardiogram or a CT angiogram before this.

A small tube will be inserted in your wrist or groin and guided to your heart using specialist X-ray equipment. Using the X-Ray and a special dye your doctor will have a look for narrowing’s in your heart arteries. This is called a coronary angiogram.

If necessary the artery may need to be opened using a small balloon and a metal mesh called a stent. This procedure is called coronary angioplasty, also known as PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention).

Risk of having a coronary angiogram/angioplasty:

Although these are safe procedures in the vast majority of patients, because we are placing equipment in and around the heart there is always a very small risk of complications. The most serious complications related to the procedure include stroke, death or a heart attack. Other potential complications include bruising at the point where we access the heart (either at the wrist or the top of the leg), bleeding, or an allergic reaction to the contrast dye that is given. Sometimes, if you have impaired kidney function we will need to monitor your blood tests for several days afterwards as there can be some deterioration following the procedure.

For a coronary angiogram alone the overall risk of complications is about 1 in 600 and for a stent insertion is 1 in 200, although it may be more than this in certain high-risk situations.

Your doctor will discuss this with you in detail beforehand. If you have any concerns about any of these risks it is important to highlight this to the healthcare professional looking after you so that these can be clarified before you come for your procedure.

It should be remembered that if you have severe disease affecting your heart then the risks of not treating it might be substantially higher than the small potential risks from the procedure.
Coronary arteries

Access sites
Before your procedure – angiogram

Do I have to starve before the test?

- You only need to refrain from eating two hours before your appointment time.

- You are allowed and encouraged to drink water until you arrive in the day ward, when the nursing staff will advise you further. In most cases we encourage you to drink right up until the time of your procedure.

I have diabetes, what medication should I take?

- If you take insulin:
  Take your regular insulin with your breakfast. Bring your insulin with you and you will be advised about your daytime and evening dose.

- If you take metformin:
  Please let us know if you are taking metformin. You will be advised when and if you need to stop your metformin before your procedure.

Medication

- Please take all other regular medications including inhalers.

- It is important to bring all medications with you, including inhalers

- I take warfarin, what should I do:
  Your referring cardiologist or the pre-assessment nurse will have advised on when to stop taking your warfarin. If you are unsure please contact pre-assessment to clarify. It is important to bring your INR record book with you (yellow book). We will advise you after your procedure when to restart your warfarin. Please make sure your warfarin clinic/INR check is booked a few days after your procedure to have your INR checked and ensure it doesn’t fluctuate too much.
What do I need to bring to hospital with me?

- Bring a dressing gown and slippers.
- You might want to bring something to read or to listen while you wait.
- Do not bring any valuables with you.

Do I need someone to collect me?

- Yes, it is important to arrange for someone to collect you from the unit after your procedure and arrange for them to stay with you for the following 24 hours. If you think this will be a problem please inform us as early as possible as this may affect the date of your procedure. If you need to organise hospital transport please do so by contacting the booking office on 033 3240 4909.
On the day of your procedure

- When you arrive to the cardiology day ward you will be admitted by one of the nursing staff who will go through an assessment with you and complete various procedures such as an ECG and inserting an IV access in your arm to allow for medications to be given.

- You will be asked to wear a hospital gown as you wait for your procedure.

- Before your procedure you will be seen by a doctor who will discuss the procedure in detail and ask you to sign a consent form. This gives you an opportunity to ask questions. Please use the space at the back to write down any questions you may have.

- Procedures are carried out between 9am and 5pm. Your appointment time is given to allow adequate time to prepare you for the procedure – this time is not the time of your procedure.

- Please note that we operate an emergency heart attack service from our department at the Royal Free Hospital. These patients need immediate treatment and must take priority. This can cause unavoidable delays. We try to avoid disruption as much as possible but as a result we cannot guarantee the exact time of your procedure. We will keep you informed if there are any changes to the schedule.
After your procedure

- Once the procedure has finished you will either walk or return on the trolley to the same bed space in recovery.

- Recovery should take approx two to four hours, depending on your procedure.

If your procedure has been carried out via:

- **Wrist**: a tight band will be applied to keep pressure on the site. This will be gradually released during recovery, you can sit up straight away and walk shortly after.

- **Groin**: if they use a small dissolvable plug known as an angioseal you will need to lie flat for 30 minutes, after this you can sit up for a further 30 minutes and get out of bed after an hour.

- **Groin**: if the doctor or nurse has to use manual pressure to seal your wound you will need to lie flat for one hour, sit up for one hour and get out of bed after two hours.

- You will be able to eat and drink once you are sitting up after your procedure. If you have any specific dietary needs please inform us as soon as you arrive. Please note we can only offer sandwiches as we have no kitchen facilities for hot food.

- A relative/friend can wait with you during your recovery. It is advisable to only have one companion due to limited space in the recovery area.

- We advise you to bring a book/newspaper/something to listen to in order to help you pass the time.

- The doctor will see you before you go home to explain the results of the procedure and discuss your plan of care. If there are any changes to your medication you will receive a prescription which you can fill in Lloyds pharmacy also on the ground floor.

- If you have had stents put in, you will need to be seen by one of the cardiac rehabilitation nurses (CRN) before you go home. They will advise you on lifestyle and medication changes after your procedure.

- If you have any holidays planned after your procedure please discuss this with the consultant who does your procedure.
Discharge advice

Going home:

• Your escort will need to come to the unit to collect you, the nursing staff can advise you after the procedure on your discharge time.

• You will have a small transparent dressing which can be removed after 24 hours. After this there is no need to put another dressing.

At home:

• If you are concerned or worried about anything you can contact the cardiology day ward where you had your procedure (see numbers on page overleaf). If you need to be seen urgently it is important to contact your GP or to attend A&E.

• It is normal for the puncture site to be sore and tender for up to one week. Bruising and a small lump may also be present.

• If you develop fever, redness, swelling, altered sensation, a large lump at the puncture site or become unwell contact your GP or local A&E.

Activities:

• You can shower after 24 hours but do not have a bath for five days. This helps the healing of the site. Please avoid using creams or lotions on the area for 24 hours.

• Bruising and a small lump may also be present.

• Please be aware it is advised to take some time off work. Please discuss this with your doctor.

• You should not drive for 48 hours after an angiogram. If you have a stent put in you should not drive for one week. This will be discussed by the cardiac rehab nurse.

• You should avoid exercise for the first few days while the puncture site heals completely.

• It is important to build activity levels back up gradually, especially if you have stents.
Important numbers:

• Cardiology admissions co-ordinator
  Barnet Hospital 020 8216 4633

• Cardiology admissions co-ordinator
  Royal Free Hospital 020 7794 0500 Ext 35182

• Cardiology day ward
  Barnet Hospital 020 8216 4618

• Cardiology day ward
  Royal Free Hospital 020 7472 6170

• Email: rf-tr.cardiac-enquiries@nhs.net

• Transport booking office 033 3240 4909

• Emergency 999/112
Questions I have about my procedure: