Vascular Surgery

Angiogram/Angioplasty

Information for patients leaving hospital

Aim

This information is to help answer any questions that you might have now, and help you know what to expect after your operation and in the first few weeks after you return home. Please feel free to ask any of your nurses or doctors if you have questions whilst in hospital.

You can find further information regarding vascular illnesses at www.circulationfoundation.org.uk /www.bsir.org (British Society of Interventional Radiology).

Should you have any concerns after your discharge please contact our vascular nurse specialists on 01223 596382.

What is the difference between an angiogram and an angioplasty?

An angiogram is a special x-ray test of the blood vessels. The procedure is generally carried out using access via an artery in the groin. It is done to find out if your blood vessels are diseased. Blood vessels are not normally seen on a standard x-ray and therefore a special dye is injected, which produces detailed x-rays of the arteries. The x-ray picture of the dye injection creates a map of the blood vessels called an angiogram.

An angioplasty is a minimally invasive procedure used to treat an artery that has become blocked or narrowed. During the procedure a thin wire is passed through the narrow or blocked section of the artery. A small tube with a deflated balloon on the end is passed over the wire. When the balloon is in the right place, it is inflated opening up the blockage or narrowing by pressing it to the sides of the artery. The balloon is then deflated and removed from the artery. At the end of the procedure the small tube is removed from the groin and a doctor/nurse will press on the artery in the groin for around five to ten minutes. This is to reduce the risk of bleeding and bruising.

What happened during the operation?

Your surgeon will have explained what your operation involved before and after your operation, and you should have been provided with written information from your consent form.
What happens after the procedure?
The nurses on the ward will carry out regular observations such as taking blood pressure, to ensure that there are no problems after the procedure. They will also look at the entry site in your groin. You will have to stay in bed for a few hours after the procedure. During this time, you should keep the leg that was punctured straight to reduce bleeding from the puncture site.

I am not sure about medicines after I leave the hospital…
Please continue taking your usual medications unless you have been told otherwise. You may be started on a second anti-platelet agent clopidogrel for three months.

What about washing?
The next day you can have a shower but try to keep the skin site dry. If it gets wet, just pat it lightly down with a towel.

When can I go home?
You may be allowed to go home on the same day, or be kept in overnight, dependent on the time of your procedure and length of time needed for bed rest. You should not drive immediately after this procedure, therefore you should arrange for someone to take you home. You should resume normal activity two days after the procedure, but avoid heavy lifting for 48-72 hours after the procedure.

What are the possible risks/complications?
- **Bruise** – this may occur around the site where the needle has been inserted into the artery; this is relatively common and is normal. You may also be tender in this region for a couple of days.

- **Haematoma** – if there is bleeding from the areas where the catheter was placed, you may have a patch where blood collects under the skin, called a haematoma. This usually clears up on its own.

- **False aneurysm** – Rarely, a pulsating lump develops in the groin at the site of the puncture. This is because bleeding occurred when the catheter was removed. The clot produced a small sac on the side of the artery via the hole made in the artery. This sac is called a false aneurysm, and can be treated with a small injection into the sac to block the hole to the artery.

- **Infection** - There is a risk of the puncture wound becoming infected. This can be treated with antibiotics.

- You may notice a small bump under the skin, at the puncture site. This bump may last for several weeks but will eventually disappear. However, if you have any concerns you should see your GP.
**Why have you told me to stop/cut down my smoking?**

Smoking is very bad for the health of your blood vessels; it damages the arterial lining, which allows the build-up of plaque that causes the blockage.

Giving up smoking (or cutting right down) is one of the best things you can do for your health.

**I am struggling to give up smoking, where can I get some help?**

There are many more ways in which you can be helped to stop smoking. For example there are new medications and other new ways of helping you. Please do not think you are on your own.

See the end of this information for useful contact numbers - and your GP practice is a very good place to start.

**Contacts for help to stop smoking:**

- **Camquit** is a local 'stop smoking’ specialist service; you can contact them directly or through your GP practice. Their telephone number is:
  - Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire 01223 723022
  - East Cambridgeshire and Fenland 0800 018 4304
  - Huntingdonshire 01480 418693
  - Website: [www.camquit.nhs.uk](http://www.camquit.nhs.uk) If you wish we can refer you to them.

- There is also a national **NHS Stop Smoking Helpline:**
  - 0800 169 0 169 (textphone: 0800 169 0 171) and website: [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)

- You can also pick up copies of the free 'Giving it up for life' booklet from the Information Centre at Addenbrooke's. This has a great deal of useful advice, attractively presented.

**Privacy & Dignity**

Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.
We are a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language or audio, please contact Interpreting services on telephone: 01223 256998, or email: interpreting@addenbrookes.nhs.uk For Large Print information please contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk