

About Cardiac Catheterization

As people age, plaque in the form of cholesterol buildup can accumulate in the blood vessels of the heart, narrowing the space through which blood must flow. Angioplasty is a procedure during which a physician inflates a small balloon inside a blood vessel to press against and flatten the plaque, re-opening the artery. The goal of angioplasty is to restore adequate blood flow (revascularization) through the affected blood vessel. To prevent the newly opened blood vessel from collapsing or being narrowed or closed by plaque again, a physician inserts a stent, a tiny, expandable metal-mesh tube that fits inside an artery that has been widened by angioplasty. Cardiology Consultants of Westchester, PC. is dedicated to providing area residents with world class heart care right in our neighborhood. Providing expertise in Cardiac Catheterization is just one more example of our dedication to providing the best medical care possible to you and your family. Cardiology Consultants of Westchester together with Vascular Associates of Westchester and Primary Care & Cardiovascular Associates is dedicated to improving the health of our patients by providing the highest quality cardiovascular care in a comfortable, compassionate environment. In addition, we are committed to contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the community through ongoing education and scientific inquiry.

What to Expect

Your physician makes a tiny puncture to access an artery in the leg, through which, a guidewire is inserted in the artery. A short hollow tube (catheter sheath) is then guided over the wire, and then a hollow guide catheter is inserted through the sheath. The catheter is guided through the arterial system to the site where angioplasty is needed. The balloon catheter is passed through the guide catheter or over the guidewire to the point of blockage in the artery and is inflated. The balloon may be deflated and re-inflated until the blockage is flattened and the artery has been adequately opened. After angioplasty, physicians often insert drug coated stents to prevent the artery from collapsing or being closed by plaque again. To place a stent, a new stent-carrying catheter is advanced through the artery to the site of the blockage. The balloon is inflated, expanding the stent. The balloon is then deflated and the catheter withdrawn, leaving the stent in place permanently. Angioplasty and stenting takes between 45 minutes and 2 hours to complete.



Pre -Treatment Guidelines

Before the procedure, your physician may order tests including:

- An X-ray;
- An electrocardiogram; and
- Blood tests.

You may also be asked to:

- Avoid eating or drinking after midnight on the night before the procedure;
- Take any medications the physician orders in connection with the procedure;

and

• Notify his or her physician of any allergies to iodine, which is used in contrast dye for some x-ray tests.

Post- Procedure Guidelines & Care

You'll be asked to remain in bed for 6 to 24 hours following the procedure. During this post-operative period, you will be closely monitored for any complications. Your physician may prescribe aspirin or Plavix to prevent blood clots. A follow-up exam may also be ordered to determine the procedure's effectiveness.

Other guidelines to follow after angioplasty include:

- Avoid lifting more than 5 or 10 pounds for the first few days;
- Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids for 2 days;
- Avoid showering for 24 hours; and
- Avoid baths for a few days. Your physician may also prescribe a cardiac rehabilitation exercise program, such as walking.



Possible Complications

Complications occur in fewer than 4 percent of angioplasties. Some possible complications include:

- External bleeding or hemorrhage at the site of catheter insertion;
- Allergic reaction to the contrast dye used to see the blood vessels;
- Plaque material or blood clots dislodging and floating downstream, leading to blockage beyond the treated area; and
- Rarely, artery thrombosis, or stoppage of blood flow caused by the formation of a blood clot in the treated area.

Stents coated with drugs help fight the scar tissue and clots that can form inside a stent. Drug-coated stents have been shown to reduce restenosis, or re-narrowing of the artery in certain blockages, which can reduce the number of repeat procedures.

If you experience any of the following symptoms immediately following angioplasty call your doctor as soon as possible:

- Chest pain
- Persistent or worsening leg pain
- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- A leg that turns blue or cold; or
- Bleeding, substantial swelling, pain, numbness, redness, or drainage where the catheter was inserted.

Never stop any of the prescribed medications before talking to our office nurse.

A Valuable Interventional Tool

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