OUR MISSION
As people of Providence, we reveal God’s love for all, especially the poor and vulnerable, through our compassionate service.

OUR CORE VALUES
Respect, Compassion, Justice, Excellence, Stewardship

Cardiac Catheterization: What you can expect

www.providence.org/heart
What is cardiac catheterization?

Cardiac catheterization is a procedure doctors use to diagnose and treat some types of heart conditions. If you have a cardiac catheterization, you’ll be awake but medicated during the procedure. The medication will keep you comfortable and relaxed. You’ll feel little, if any, pain; however, you may be sore after the procedure where the catheter was inserted.

During the procedure, your doctor will thread a thin plastic tube (catheter) from a blood vessel in your arm or leg into the coronary arteries or chambers of your heart. The catheter measures the blood flow to the heart and tests how well the heart is pumping.

The doctor will inject dye (contrast) through the catheter into the coronary arteries and heart. This is called a coronary angiography. The dye will show up on an X-ray and reveal any blockages that may exist in the arteries.

The day before your procedure...

- Talk with your doctor about medications you SHOULD and should NOT take on the day of your procedure.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight before your procedure.
- Arrange for someone to drive you home from the hospital. You will not be allowed to drive for 24 hours after the procedure. Also, you must do no heavy lifting for three to five days. It’s a good idea to have someone stay at home with you for 24 hours after the procedure.

The day of your procedure...

When you arrive at the hospital, please check in at the admitting desk. You will be escorted to your room and given a hospital gown to change into. We will safely store all of your clothing.

A nurse will take your vital signs and attach a heart monitor to you. He or she will ask you some questions and have you sign paperwork giving us permission to do the procedure. The nurse will start an IV so you can receive fluids and medications during the procedure.

If your doctor plans to insert the catheter through a blood vessel in your groin, we will shave the insertion area before you are moved to the cardiovascular lab. Providing as much privacy as possible, we’ll thoroughly cleanse your groin area then cover you from head to toe with sterile drapes.

You’ll receive oxygen and medication to relax you. You’ll feel the doctor push on your arm or groin where the catheter will be inserted. You’ll feel a “bee sting” and brief burning sensation when the numbing medication is started. The doctor will thread a thin flexible wire through the blood vessel of your arm or groin to your heart. The doctor will then slip the catheter over the wire and guide it to your heart.

You may notice a large C-shaped machine moving around you. This X-ray machine may come close to you, but it won’t touch you.

When the doctor injects dye (contrast) through the catheter, you will notice a warm, flushing feeling from head to toe. You may feel the need to urinate, but you won’t.

When the procedure is complete, we’ll remove all the devices. If the artery in your groin was used, firm pressure will be placed on the area for 10 minutes to ensure the puncture wound closes. A nurse will put a dressing on the area to prevent bleeding.

After the procedure...

When you are moved to the recovery area, your family is welcome to join you.

During recovery, you must lie flat on your back for two hours. It’s very important that you do not lift your head or bend your leg. We will monitor you closely, checking your vital signs, pulse and catheter insertion site every 15 minutes for about three hours.

Depending on your situation, your doctor may recommend that you stay in the hospital overnight. Before you leave the hospital, we’ll review discharge instructions with you and give you a CD of the procedure to take home. You will need a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss the findings of the procedure.