



# Diagnostic cardiac catheter procedure

## Scottish Adult Congenital Cardiac Service (SACCS)

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### ➤ About this leaflet

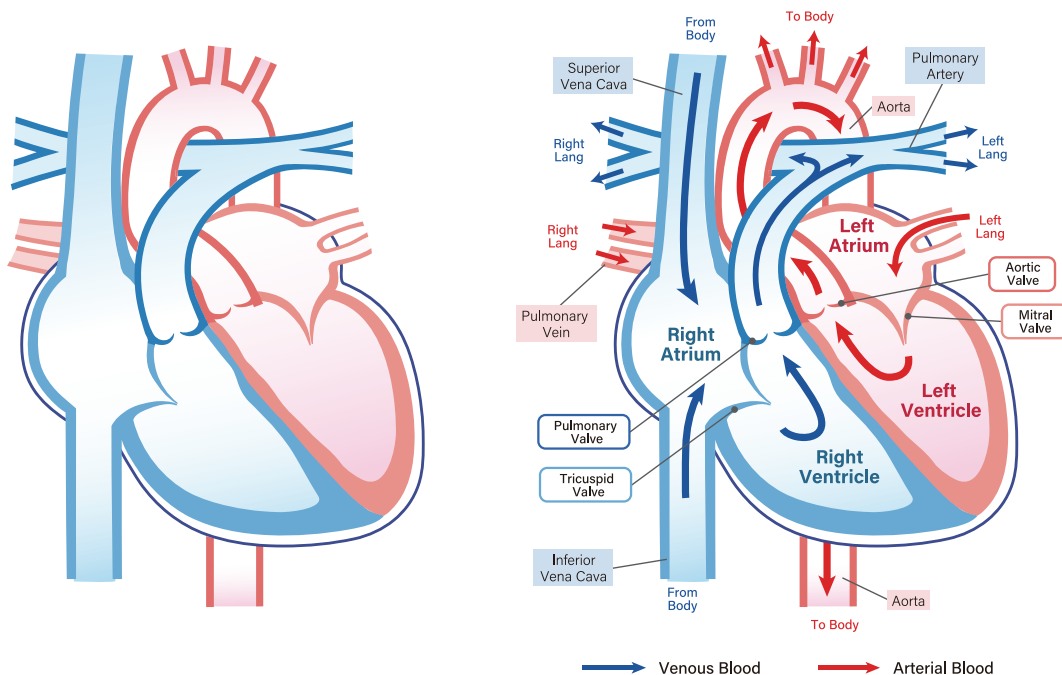
This purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information about what happens before, during and after a diagnostic cardiac catheter, including advice about going home and follow-up care.

### ➤ What is a diagnostic cardiac catheter procedure?

This test may be required because you have had a change in your symptoms or in preparation for heart surgery.

The aim of this procedure is to find out more information about your heart and the pressures in your lung arteries. While you will not feel any different following a diagnostic cardiac catheter, the information gained from the procedure will support your clinical team to make decisions on how best to look after you.

The procedure is carried out in a special x-ray room called a Catheterisation (Cath) Lab and there will be a number of staff members present to support you through your procedure. This will include your consultant, nursing staff, a radiographer (to take x-ray pictures) and a physiologist (to monitor your heart rate/rhythm and record measurements). Unless you have been told otherwise, you will be awake during the procedure, but sedation can be given if you or your doctor feel it is necessary.



## Preparation for your procedure

Prior to your procedure, the specialist team may contact you to explain more about the timing of your procedure and discuss any specific instructions about fasting or medication.

To ensure we can provide you with the best care, you must:

- Tell us if you are allergic to anything, including x-ray dye.
- Bring a dressing gown and slippers with you, as well as something to help you pass the time such as a book, handheld or tablet device.
- Remove any make-up/fake tan and nail polish/acrylics so that we are able to assess you accurately throughout the procedure.
- Leave all jewellery and valuables, other than your wedding ring and a watch at home. You are allowed to wear your wedding ring during the procedure.
- If you wear glasses or a hearing aid, please leave them on or bring with you, so that you are able to read any paperwork and hear any instructions the team may give you.

### **Fasting**

For cardiac catheter procedures carried out under local anaesthetic there is no requirement to fast. You should eat a light breakfast before you leave home but avoid a heavy meal. You can continue to drink water until the time of your procedure.

### **Medications**

Please bring all your current medication in their original packaging with you when you come in for your procedure. Continue to take your medication as normal with the following exceptions:

- If you are taking blood thinners (Warfarin or Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Dabigatran or Edoxaban), your Nurse Specialist will contact you to discuss whether or not you need to stop these medications.
- If you have diabetes, you may need to modify your insulin dosage on the day of your procedure. Your Nurse Specialist will contact you to discuss whether or not this is required. If you are on metformin, please do not take this on the morning of the procedure.

### **Hints and tips**

- You may feel worried or scared before coming for a cardiac catheter procedure.
- You may worry about what the results will mean for your care.
- You may worry about how you'll manage to tolerate the procedure or what it will be like.

These are all normal responses to have. However, there are things that you can do to help prepare for coming in, such as:

- Let us know that you are worried.
- Ask us questions about what will happen or what you will see.
- Consider making a playlist or downloading a podcast or audiobook to listen to when you're in the Cath Lab.
- Look out a comfort item to bring with you such as a soothing / comfort blanket.
- Plan some 'down time' for the night before you come in and do something that you enjoy.
- Try and get a good night's sleep.



## Day of your procedure

When you arrive at the hospital, please report to hospital reception and let staff know that you are attending the Cath Lab for a procedure. You will be given directions to the Cardiac Day Unit located on level 2.

You will be shown to your room and given a gown and disposable underwear to wear. The nurse will ask you some questions about your medical history and take your blood pressure and pulse. They will then insert a small tube into a vein in your arm or the back of your hand to allow the administration of any sedation, fluids and any medications you may need during the procedure. The doctor will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions before asking you to sign a consent form.

### Hints and tips

There are some techniques that may help during the procedure. Try practicing these beforehand so that you are familiar with them.

#### Take a moment to notice

Take a few deep breaths and notice:

- 5 things you can see.
- 4 things you can feel.
- 3 things you hear.
- 2 things you can smell.
- 1 thing you can taste.

#### Belly breathing

- Take a deep breath into your belly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold for 1 or 2 seconds.
- Slowly breathe out for 6 seconds.
- Hold for a few seconds and then repeat.

## What happens during the procedure?

Before the procedure begins, the area where the tube is inserted is numbed with local anaesthetic. This will cause a slight nip and stinging sensation, but afterwards you shouldn't feel any discomfort. A small incision is then made at the top of the leg (groin), in the arm or at the side of your neck and a tube is inserted into the vein and/or artery. This allows a special wire and catheter to be guided up into the heart and lung arteries.

Information will be gathered from various locations through the heart and lung arteries. Most people feel nothing during this time but it is possible to feel some extra heart beats during the procedure, which is normal. You will be monitored throughout the entire procedure, which will allow us to see if this is happening and provide any treatment if needed. The doctor may also inject contrast dye to assess the blood flow through your heart and lung arteries, however we will always tell you before doing this.



You may be asked to do some exercise during the procedure so that we can assess how your heart responds. This is usually done by pedalling on a horizontal bike. Your doctor will have discussed this with you beforehand and the team will guide you through this during the procedure.

The procedure takes around 1 hour to complete and you will be required to stay in hospital for 3-4 hours afterwards.

## **What are the risks of the procedure?**

The majority of patients (approximately 97-98%) have no major problems but serious complications can happen. It is important you understand the risk of these complications attached to this procedure before you sign your consent form.

Serious risks are uncommon but include:

- Bleeding or bruising of the skin at the area where the catheter is inserted.
- Infection including wound infection and endocarditis.
- Arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms).
- Major bleeding or serious damage to blood vessels.
- Stroke.
- Heart attack.
- Death.

## **After your procedure?**

After the tube has been removed, pressure will be applied to stop any bleeding. When the vein and/or artery has sealed over, a dressing will be applied to the area. You will need to rest lying quite flat or sitting in a chair for around 4 hours. Most patients will go home on the same day as their procedure, however some do require to stay overnight, depending on individual needs.

The nurses will regularly check your blood pressure, pulse and wound dressing. When you are able to sit up, you will be given something to eat and drink. After resting, you will be taken for a short walk to make sure you are well enough to go home.

The doctor will explain the result of the tests before you leave. Any changes to your medication or further plans will be discussed with you at this time and you will be given a discharge letter to take to your General Practitioner (GP).

### **Hints and tips**

As you will probably feel a bit tired for a few days after your procedure, plan some relaxing activities that will help you feel at ease.

Here are some ideas of things that might help:

- Are there any films/TV shows/box sets that make you feel good?
- What music do you find soothing?
- Arrange a visit/phone call with close family/friends.



## **When you get home**

### Caring for your wound

- Do not shower or bathe for the first 24 hours post procedure as this may increase the risk of infection and/or bleeding from the wound.
- Avoid using soap or perfumed products when showering or bathing.
- Always use a clean towel to pat the wound area dry.
- If you have a dressing over your wound area, remove this in the shower or bath, 2 days after your procedure.
- You may experience some bruising and/or discomfort over the wound area. Painkillers such as paracetamol can be taken and you can also place an ice pack on the wound. Any discomfort to the wound area should reduce after the first few days.
- If your wound area does bleed, apply firm pressure to the area for 15 minutes. If it continues to bleed after applying 15 minutes of pressure, continue to press and ask someone to phone the ambulance service. Inform them that you have had a cardiac catheter procedure, and that your wound won't stop bleeding.

Please contact the SACCS Nurse Specialist or your GP if:

- You develop any unusual pain, swelling, heat, redness or pus at the wound area.
- You experience a fever or sharp rise in your temperature.
- You are unable to weight bear.

If you have any concerns at the weekend or out of hours, please contact the Cardiology ward on 0141 951 5250 or the Coronary Care Unit on 0141 951 5202.

### **About medication**

The nursing and medical staff will give you advice on tablets that we ask you to take prior to being discharged from the ward. A letter will be sent to your GP to advise them of any changes to your medication.

### **About eating and drinking**

Following your discharge from hospital, you may resume your normal diet.

### **Exercise**

Avoid excessive movement or heavy lifting, including lifting young children and pets, for 1 week after your procedure as this may cause the wound to bleed. You can start gentle exercise, such as walking, the day after your procedure and gradually build this up over the next 2 weeks. If your wound area has healed well and is not uncomfortable, you can restart your normal physical activity after 2 weeks.

### **Work**

If you work in an office-based job, we would advise that you do not return to work for 2 days after your procedure. For more physical/manual jobs, we advise that you do not return to work for 1 week after your procedure.



## Driving

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) advises that you should not drive for 48 hours after your procedure. You do not need to inform the DVLA about your procedure. If you hold a commercial license, you will need to contact the DVLA for further advice.

## Flying

If you are planning a holiday, we advise to wait at least 4 weeks before travelling. This is to make sure you have fully recovered. Please ensure you have valid travel insurance in place.

## Contact

You can contact our Nurse Specialist team for any non-urgent enquiries on 07795 953070.

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