

Southernex



Imaging Group Ltd

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CEREBRAL ANGIOGRAPHY

Patient Information

Your doctor has asked us to perform a cerebral angiogram which is an x-ray test to show the blood vessels supplying the head and neck region. The test allows us to see the arteries and the veins.

We would like to make your visit to us as easy and comfortable as possible. We have designed this brochure to help prepare you for your procedure.

What happens before the angiogram?

You will be given instructions regarding the time of your appointment and any necessary preparation.

Please don't eat for 6 hours prior to your appointment but you may have sips of water. Your usual medication should be taken with a small amount of water. Please notify us if you are taking aspirin, heparin, Coumadin, Marevan or warfarin tablets; also if you have kidney (renal) impairment or diabetes, or if you have asthma.

Upon admission you will be allocated a bed and prepared for your procedure, which will be performed in the Radiology Department. Your name is placed on a theatre list for your procedure, the earliest time this will be performed is one hour post admission time. This time may vary allowing for complicated procedures and emergencies on the day. You will be changed into a hospital gown. A nurse will shave one or both groins. A tiny needle will be placed into one of your arm veins which allows us to give you intravenous medicine during your test if needed.

What happens during the angiogram?

You will be taken to the angiography room and asked to lie on an x-ray bed which has the angiographic x-ray equipment over it.

If you are anxious, intravenous sedation can be given.

Your groin region will be cleaned with a disinfectant solution then sterile sheets placed over your body so as to avoid infection. The radiologist will inject a little local anaesthetic into your groin to numb the skin so you don't experience any pain during the procedure. A fine plastic tube called a catheter is then inserted into the artery in the groin region, then it is steered up to the arteries in your neck. You cannot feel the movement of the catheter as there are no nerves inside the arteries.

You have four separate arteries which supply blood to the head and neck region – one on each side at the front of your neck (these are called the carotid arteries) and one on each side at the back of your neck (these are called the vertebral arteries). Depending on the nature of your test, we may need to inject x-ray dye into one, two, three or four of these arteries. The catheter has to be placed into each of the arteries in turn. The catheter can be steered by the radiologist who is watching its progress on the television screens next to the angiography bed.

When the catheter is positioned correctly, x-ray dye (which is a clear liquid like water) will be injected through it. X-ray pictures are taken as the dye travels through the blood vessel. Usually many sets of pictures are taken to fully examine all the blood vessels in the area of interest. You usually feel warm as the x-ray dye is injected.

What are the risks?

Cerebral angiography is a very safe procedure as technologically advanced equipment is used. However, all medical procedures carry some risk. In particular, the major risk with cerebral angiography is stroke. There is a 1 in 200 risk of stroke, no matter how carefully or perfectly the examination is performed. Naturally all efforts will be made to ensure this does not happen, but an absolute guarantee can never be given. The stroke could range from mild (which resolves) to a very severe stroke. The procedure also carries other rare risks. They include damage to the artery at the site of the catheter insertion, reaction to the x-ray dye, and transient blindness (which resolves).

What happens after the angiogram?

When the angiogram is completed, the catheter is removed and pressure applied to the site where it was inserted to prevent swelling.

You will be moved back onto your bed and a nurse will check your blood pressure, pulse and catheter site frequently. You will be asked to keep your leg still. You will be given food and drinks during this period. You will need to stay in bed for between 4 to 6 hours. After this time you will be allowed to get dressed.

If your test is being performed as a day-procedure, you will need someone to drive you home after the angiogram and it is best if you take it easy for the first day after the test.

If you don't live in or near Brisbane, you will need to stay in Brisbane overnight. If you are unable to stay with family or friends, our receptionist are happy to help arrange suitable accommodation.

The Saturday following your angiogram, one of our nursing staff will telephone you to check your progress.

If you experience any bleeding or other problems after the test please phone us on 3371 9588 between 8.00am and 6.00pm or at night on our after hours number 3839 2288.