



UNDERSTANDING RIGHT HEART CATHETERIZATION

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

A right heart catheterization is a test to look inside your heart. It is also called a right heart cath. A catheter (bendable tube) is put into a vein in your neck or groin.

Using a TV screen and x-rays, the catheter is gently guided into your heart. The catheter is moved around inside your heart and into the blood vessels going to your lungs. This lets your health care team see how well your heart is working.

During the heart cath, the pressures in the chambers inside your heart are checked. We can also see how much oxygen is in your blood in different parts of your heart. The valves between the chambers of the heart can be checked.

GETTING READY

The night before your right heart cath do not eat any solid foods after midnight, but you may have clear liquids until _____.

The morning of your right heart cath we ask you to:

- Take your medications including your blood pressure medications as prescribed , except HOLD any diabetes (sugar) pill, HOLD any regular (short acting) insulin, HOLD blood thinners such as warfarin or coumadin, HOLD Tacrolimus (if prescribed) and take ½ dose of your long acting insulin
- Report to the Heart and Vascular Center at _____. Your family may wait there during your procedure.

DURING YOUR RIGHT HEART CATH

You will be escorted to the Cardiac Transition Unit (CTU) or the Cath Lab to prepare you for your procedure, which takes about thirty minutes. You may have an IV inserted in your arm before the procedure.

You will lie on a hard movable x-ray table. There will be large x-ray machines and other equipment in the room.

Your caregiver will clean the skin over a vein with soap and water. The procedure site is numbed with a local anesthetic. The skin may be shaved. Sterile sheets will be put over you to keep the area clean.

A catheter will be put into a vein in your neck or groin in order to measure pressure and obtain oxygen levels in your blood in the heart chambers and lung arteries. Once completed, the catheter will be taken out of the vein and pressure applied for a short time to stop the bleeding.

AFTER YOUR RIGHT HEART CATH

You will be allowed to go home after a short observation time.

Rest for today and do not lift more than five pounds.

Continue to take your medications you were taking before the heart cath. If you were taking blood thinners, ask your physician when you should start taking them again.

A small amount of blood on the dressing is normal. Mild bruising at the site is normal.

If you experience bleeding or sudden swelling at the puncture site, apply direct pressure. If bleeding or swelling continues in spite of pressure, call 911 or have someone drive you to the nearest emergency room.

SYMPTOMS TO LOOK FOR TO ALERT YOU TO POSSIBLE MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Call your primary care physician if you experience any of these symptoms:

- Excessive bleeding from the puncture site.
- Redness, drainage, warmth or increased swelling from the puncture site.
- Fever above 100.5 F.
- Shortness of breath at rest or a change in your usual breathing pattern.