

After Your Angiogram / Venogram

What to expect

This handout explains the purpose of angiogram and venogram. It describes what you can expect before, during, and after treatment.

What is angiography/venography?

An angiogram or venogram is an X-ray picture of the inside of your blood vessels. During this procedure we place a *catheter* (a small plastic tube) into your *artery* or *vein* (blood vessels), and X-rays are taken. This procedure allows your doctor to see if your blood vessels are narrow, leaking, too large, or blocked. After this your healthcare provider will decide on the best treatment for you.

How is it done?

This procedure is done by an *interventional radiologist*, a doctor or advanced practice provider who specializes in procedures that are guided by X-ray images.

- We will put *anesthetic* (numbing medicine) on your skin. It will sting for 5 to 10 seconds. Then the area will be numb and you will not feel pain.
- Your doctor will make a very small incision (less than ¼ inch long) in your groin, arm, wrist, or neck.
- Your doctor will insert a catheter into your blood vessels. Then they will inject *contrast*, which is a substance that helps your body parts show up more clearly on the MRI.
- We will then take X-ray images of your blood vessels.

What are possible risks of an angiogram/venogram?

You may have:

- An allergic reaction to the contrast, which may cause hives, a drop in blood pressure, swelling of the skin, or unconsciousness.
- Minor discomfort if the local anesthetic does not completely numb the area and/or an allergic reaction to the drug used in the local anesthetic.



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- A kidney problem that is made worse by the contrast.
- A clot that forms around the catheter and blocks your blood vessel.
- An injury to the access vessel from placement of the catheter, causing bleeding or a blockage of blood flow to the leg.
- Surgery to correct damage caused by the procedure.
- An infection from the puncture site.

What should I expect after my procedure?

- We will watch you closely for a short time in the Imaging Services department.
- Plan to stay for 2-6 hours for monitoring.
- Most patients then go to a short-stay unit within the hospital unless your referring doctor has made other plans.
- You should be able to eat, drink, and take your normal medicines.
- Your family member or driver may go with you to this area.
- If further treatment is needed, you may need to stay overnight.
- Before you leave, a nurse will give you a written plan to follow when you are home.
- Make sure you know when to come back for a follow-up visit.
- You may have minor discomfort.

For 24 Hours

You may have been given medicine to make you sleepy during the procedure. This will stay in your body for several hours. It could affect your judgment. Because of this, until the day after your procedure, or for 24 hours:

- Do not drive a car.
- Do not use machinery or power tools.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not take medicines such as tranquilizers or sleeping pills unless your doctor prescribed them.

You may be lightheaded or feel dizzy. We strongly advise you to do only light activities and get plenty of rest. Someone should stay with you overnight.

For 48 to 72 Hours

Do only moderate activities for 48 hours after your procedure. This will allow your puncture sites to heal. **Do not do any strenuous work, heavy lifting, or exercise.**

Wound Care

- Keep the site where the catheter was placed clean and dry for 24 hours.
- You may bathe or shower after 24 hours unless your doctor or nurse tells you not to.
- Use a clean, dry towel to pat the site dry after bathing.
- Do not apply any lotions, creams, ointments, or powders to the site.
- You may want to cover the puncture site with a Band-Aid until it is healed. If you use a Band-Aid, change it daily. For the next few days, check the site for any of the symptoms listed below.

It is normal to have some discomfort or bruising at the puncture site for several days.

When to Call

Call us right away if you have:

- Mild fever, pain, redness, swelling at the puncture site or dizziness
- Mild shortness of breath, chest tightness or chest pain
- Any other non-urgent questions or concerns

Call 911 and go to the nearest emergency department if you have:

- Severe bleeding or any bleeding that does not stop after you have applied gentle pressure for about 15 minutes
- Drainage from your incision
- Fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C) or chills
- Shortness of breath that is getting worse
- New chest pain
- Dizziness
- Vomiting

Who to Call

University of Washington Medical Center and Northwest Hospital

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the Interventional Radiology Department:

- Montlake: 206.598.6209, option 2
- Northwest: 206.598.6209, option 3

Harborview Medical Center

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the Interventional Radiology Department at 206-744-2857.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC – Montlake:
206.598.6209, option 2

UWMC – Northwest:
206.598.6209, option 3

Harborview Medical Center:
206.744.2857

After hours and on weekends and holidays:
Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Interventional Radiology resident on call.